

ВАЛЕНТИН РУНОВ



АФГАНСКАЯ

ВОЙНА

БОЕВЫЕ
ОПЕРАЦИИ

Abstract

In the last days of December 1979, a limited contingent of the USSR Armed Forces entered the territory of Afghanistan "... in order to provide international assistance to the friendly Afghan people, as well as to create favorable conditions for the prohibition of possible Afghan actions by neighboring states." This military action, pursuing rather vague goals and planned for a short time, in practice for the Soviet people resulted in a bloody war that lasted nine years, one month and eighteen days, took the lives and health of about 55 thousand Soviet people, but never brought those who blessed it the rulers of the desired victory.

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Valentin Alexandrovich Runov

Afghan war. Combat operations

Introduction

In the last days of December 1979, a limited contingent of the USSR Armed Forces entered the territory of Afghanistan "... in order to provide international assistance to the friendly Afghan people, as well as to create favorable conditions for the prohibition of possible Afghan actions by neighboring states." This military action, pursuing rather vague goals and planned for a short time, in practice for the Soviet people resulted in a bloody war that lasted nine years, one month and eighteen days, took the lives and health of about 55 thousand Soviet people, but never brought those who blessed it the rulers of the desired victory.

At the same time, the disappointing political and military-strategic results of the war can by no means serve as a measure of the quality of the military skill of a limited contingent of Soviet troops, especially their operational skill and tactics, which developed in the course of hostilities. They received comprehensive development taking into account the peculiarities of Afghanistan - its physical and geographical conditions, economy, population, history, as well as domestic and foreign policy of recent decades.

Afghanistan is a country in the Middle East, located in the southwestern part of Central Asia. The area of its territory - 655 thousand km - is almost equal to the area of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark combined. The total length of the borders is 5421 km, of which with the Soviet Union - 2348 km, with Iran - 820 km, with Pakistan - 2180 km, with China - 73 km. The Soviet-Afghan border partly runs along the natural boundary of the Amu Darya and Pyanj rivers. The border with Iran runs through flat, hilly and desert areas. The Afghan-Pakistani border and the border with China lie along mountain ranges. Afghanistan has no access to the sea. The shortest distance from its southern borders to the Indian Ocean is about 500 km.

In terms of physical and geographical conditions, Afghanistan is a mountainous desert subtropical country, occupying the eastern part of

The Iranian Plateau, which is the most extensive, dry and deserted of the numerous uplands of the Near and Middle East. About 85% of the country's territory is occupied by mountains, among which two marginal chains stand out sharply - northern and southern, between which there are internal plateaus with vast deserts. The northern chain of mountains

within Afghanistan includes the mountain ranges of the Paropamiz and Hindu Kush systems, stretching almost 1200 km from the junction of the borders with the Soviet Union and Iran to the Pamir highlands. The width of the mountain range, together with the highlands of Ghazarajat adjoining from the south, is 300–500 km. The absolute height of the ridges is from 2000 to 7750 m. They are actually inaccessible to the actions of the troops.

In the east of Afghanistan, along the border with Pakistan, the rugged Suleiman Mountains stretch for 700 km. The width of this mountain system is from 250 to 400 km, the height is from 2000 to 3500 m. The mountains consist of several parallel ridges, dissected by low dry gorges, along which the main land communications to Pakistan and India pass, along which military operations of minor military operations are possible. formations.

Between the Hindu Kush and the Suleiman Mountains is the Ghazni-Kandahar plateau, which occupies about 20% of the territory of Afghanistan.

From the north, the Paropamiz mountains adjoin the Bactrian Plain, which extends to the Karakum desert and is a flat sandy strip with a large number of oases, densely indented by a network of irrigation canals. The Western Plain runs along the Afghan-

Iranian border from the Geriruz River to the Farrakhrud River at an altitude of 500-1200 m above sea level. The zone of sandy deserts of

Khash, Dashti-Margo and Registan, stretching from west to east for 540 km and from north to south for 580 km, is limitedly accessible for military operations. The road network in the country is very

poorly developed. Its total length is about 19 thousand km, and its density is less than 3 km per 100 sq. km. km of territory. The basis of land communications is the Kabul-Puli-Khumri-Mazar-i-Sharif-Adhoy-Herat-Kandahar-Kabul ring highway and the roads extending from it,

with asphalt-concrete and gravel coating. However, the proportion of paved roads is small, no more than 25%. The rest are improved ground and ground. The capacity of paved roads ranges from 6,000 to 8,000 vehicles per day, while the rest are two to three times lower. Movement on most roads is difficult due to the insignificant width of the roadway 3-10 m, the presence of a large number of bridges, tunnels and high mountainous areas, as well as the practical impossibility of their normal operation in winter.

The river network of Afghanistan is distributed very unevenly. It is relatively dense in the mountains and very rarefied in the plains. Almost all rivers are mountainous, characterized by a high flow rate of 3–5 m/s and a significant fluctuation of the water level at different times of the year and day. They are especially high in water during the spring flood (March, April) and during the snowmelt period (July, August). The largest river in the northern part of the country

is the Amudarya River, which has a width of 120 to 1500 m, a depth of 2 to 10 m and a flow rate of about 2 m/s. Another river - Geriruz - forms a natural border with Iran for 96 km.

In the southwestern part of the country, the largest river is the Helmand, which has a length of 1150 km, a width of 90 to 350 m, a depth of 1–2 m, and a flow rate of 1–2 m/s.

In the eastern part of the country, the Kabul River flows with the high-water left tributary of the Kunar, which in the Jalalabad region has a width of up to 200 m and a depth of 5–7 m.

All Afghan rivers, with the exception of the Amu Darya, are fordable for a significant part of the year, but they represent serious water barriers during floods.

The vegetation cover of Afghanistan, although not abundant, is quite diverse. Less than 5% of the country's territory is occupied by forests. At altitudes from 1500 to 1800 m, drought-resistant types of vegetation predominate: astragalus, camel thorn, etc. Wormwood, saltwort and saxaul grow in the deserts. In the areas bordering Pakistan, there is a small area of Himalayan-type forests. Here, at an altitude of up to 2500 m, evergreen oaks grow, and at an altitude of up to

3300 m - pines, firs and cedars. Above are crooked forests and alpine meadows. The climate of the

country is subtropical, sharply continental, arid with significant daily and annual fluctuations in air temperature. The hottest month in most of the country is July, when average monthly temperatures range from 30 to 50 degrees Celsius. The maximum heating of the open surface of the earth in summer reaches 70 degrees. The coldest month is January, and in some places in the mountains it is February, when the average monthly temperature drops to minus 2-14 degrees. The depth of snow cover at the end of winter on the plains and in the valleys is 10–15 cm, and in the mountains it often reaches 2 m. Snowstorms often last up to several days. Strong winds prevail in the mountain valleys, especially within the mountainous section of the Termez-Kabul road, their speed reaches 50 m/s.

Squall winds of great strength often arise on the tops of mountains and passes.

In such difficult physical and geographical conditions, the conduct of classic operations and battles, provided for by the regulations and instructions of the Soviet Armed Forces, in practice turned out to be impossible.

The Afghan economy also contributed little to the conduct of large-scale intensive military operations on the territory of the country. The industry, which was in its infancy, was represented by 200-300 factory-type enterprises, which produced significantly less products than was necessary for the normal functioning of the country. Electricity production ranged from 0.8 to 1.1 billion kWh, natural gas - from 2.5 to 3 billion cubic meters. m, coal - from 0.15 to 0.2 million tons, steel - from 0.9 to 1.1 million tons, cement - from 0.1 to 0.2 million tons.

There is no military industry in the country. During the war, a military repair base was created, which included an auto repair plant and workshops for the repair of armored vehicles, automotive equipment, artillery and small arms. However, the productive capacity of these enterprises was very small and could not ensure the maintenance of weapons and military equipment at the required level of combat readiness.

More than 85% of the economically active population is employed in agriculture in Afghanistan. Its leading branches are agriculture, nomadic and semi-nomadic animal husbandry.



The main areas of agriculture are river valleys and oases, where wheat, corn, barley, rice, lentils, peas, beans, cotton, sugar beets and a number of other crops are grown. Grain crops are grown mainly on the Bactrian plain, and industrial crops - in the northern regions of the country. The most developed branch of

animal husbandry is vegetable growing, which is spread throughout Afghanistan. Cattle and horses are bred in its northern regions, and camels are bred in the steppe and semi-steppe regions. The number of livestock is sharply limited by the lack of a forage base and the low level of veterinary provision. As a result, agriculture only in peacetime and in the most fruitful years was able to provide the country with the minimum necessary amount of food and raw materials for local industry. However, during the war, it could not provide the troops with the necessary material base. In general, the Afghan economy, which is mainly export-oriented, could not support the combat operations of a significant

contingent of troops, their conduct of large-scale operations and battles. The population of Afghanistan is about 17 million people. Its average density is 25 people per 1 sq. km. Most densely populated

Kabul and Herat oases, where the population density reaches 300 and 150 people per 1 sq. km. But the southern deserts and highlands of Central and North-Eastern Afghanistan are almost deserted. More than 20 nationalities belonging to various language

groups live in the country. The largest of the groups are the Afghans (Pashtuns). It has about 9 million people. This is followed by Tajiks (more than 4 million), Uzbeks (1.5 million), Hazaras (1.4 million), Turkmens (1.1 million), and others. Peasants make up about 85 million of the country's population. Industrial

enterprises employ no more than 600 thousand people. A large social stratum of Afghan society is the clergy. The majority of the population leads a sedentary lifestyle. At the same time, there are about 3 million nomads in the country. The educational level of the Afghan society is extremely low, about 80% of it is illiterate, but it is highly religious. The vast majority of the population are Muslims, 90% of which are Sunnis and 10% are Muslims.

Shiites.

The history of the Afghan people is nothing but the history of resistance to various conquerors, civil wars and coup d'état. Thus, it is known that Alexander the Great, who made an aggressive campaign to the East, took about five years to break the resistance of the Pashtun tribes. Ten centuries later, the Arab conquerors met the desperate resistance of the Afghan tribes. Six times they launched an

offensive against Kabul and the regions of the central plateau, but each time they were forced to retreat, having suffered heavy losses. For the first time, a centralized independent state on the territory of modern Afghanistan was formed by Ahmedshah Durrani in 1747 and, after the

name of its first ruler, went down in history as the Durranian state. In the subsequent years of his reign, Ahmedshah significantly expanded his borders, conquering Punjab, Kashmir, Sind, Sirhind, Balochistan, Khorasan, Balkh and some other areas of the left bank of the Amu Darya.

The dominant position in the newly created state was occupied by the khans of the Abdali (Durrani) tribe. Afghan subordinates

the tribes retained a tribal structure, in which all aspects of the internal life of the tribe were decided by the jirga - a meeting of the members of the tribe. Most of the Afghan tribes were exempted from taxes in order to supply warriors to the Shah. This contributed to the rooting of the militancy of the Afghan tribes, which was skillfully used by the khans, who sought to free themselves from the central government. The latter was the main cause of uprisings and rebellions, which are rich in the history of Afghanistan in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. As a result, the successors of Ahmad Shah lost most of his conquests, and in 1818 the Durranian state broke up into four principalities: Herat,

Kandahar, Kabul and Peshawar. In the 30s. 19th century the process of uniting the Afghan lands around the Kabul principality began again. However, the British aggression in 1838 interrupted it. The first Anglo-Afghan war (1838–1842) began. The 30,000th occupation corps invaded Southwestern Afghanistan and by the end of 1839 had occupied Kandahar, Ghazni and Kabul. However, the arrival of foreign invaders did not find support among the Afghans. A guerrilla war began, culminating in a mass uprising in Kabul in November 1841, as a result of which the occupying army was destroyed and the protege of the British, Shah Shuja, was killed. By the end of 1842, the remnants of the British troops were e

The common armed struggle and the victory over the aggressor contributed to the formation of a single Afghan state, led by Dost Mohammed. In 1855, Kandahar was annexed to the Kabul principality, and in 1863, Herat. Subsequently, under emir Sher Ali (reigned in 1863-1879), the subordination of the regions of the left bank of the Amu Darya to the central government was completed and Badakhshan was conquered. Sher Ali strengthened the central government and significantly increased the army, which put up a worthy resistance to the second British aggression in 1873-1880.

As for the first time, the English occupation corps, numbering over 36 thousand people, invaded Afghanistan and occupied Kandahar in January 1879, thereby forcing Emir Yakub Khan to conclude the Gandamak Treaty with England. Under the terms of the treaty, Afghanistan turned into a state dependent on England and lost the districts of Sibi, Kurram and Pishin. These conditions were unacceptable to the Kabul authorities, the Afghan people and

caused a powerful anti-English popular uprising that broke out in September 1879. On July 27, 1880, near Maiwand (near Kandahar), Afghan forces defeated the British brigade. At the same time, the British garrison in Kabul was besieged by almost 100,000 rebels. England was forced to abandon plans to conquer Afghanistan and withdraw its troops from the country. However, London managed to take advantage of the change of rulers and sign an agreement with the new emir Abdurrahman on November 12, 1893, according to which English control over the country's foreign policy was maintained. The same agreement determined the borders of the state, which are preserved at the present time. By the end of the 19th - beginning of the 20th century. in Afghanistan, a centralized state was formed, which had a regular army, which had certain economic and political relations with its neighbors, including Russia. relatively

During the 1st World War 1914-1918. Afghanistan remained neutral. All attempts by the German-Austrian-Turkish mission, which worked in Kabul in 1915-1916. and tried to involve Afghanistan in the war, they were not successful.

In February 1919, Amanullah Khan became emir, who decided to take advantage of the results of the Great October Socialist Revolution and the Civil War in Russia and on February 28 proclaimed the independence of Afghanistan. This was the reason for the third Anglo-Afghan war (May 3 - June 3, 1919), in which the 340,000-strong British army was opposed by the 40,000-strong Afghan one. Initially, the British won the battle in the Khyber direction. But in another, Waziristan, sector, Afghan troops besieged the fortress of Tal on May 27. At the same time, an uprising of the border Pashtun tribes broke out, and the liberation movement in India also intensified. These circumstances forced London to agree to a truce, and then to the signing on August 8, 1919 in the city of Rawalpindi of a preliminary peace treaty. The United Kingdom signed the final peace treaty with Afghanistan only in November 1921. The victory of the Afghan people in this war was largely facilitated by the recognition of the sovereignty of Afghanistan on March 27, 1919

young Soviet Russia, as well as the defeat of the British interventionists in the Transcaspian region by the Red Army.

On February 28, 1921, a Soviet-Afghan friendly treaty was signed in Kabul, which was the first equal treaty between Afghanistan and a great power. On June 24, 1931, Afghanistan and the USSR signed an agreement on neutrality and mutual non-aggression, which was extended four times, each time for ten years. The last signing of this agreement took place in December 1975. Progressive

transformations in Afghanistan continued from 1919 to 1928. In 1923, the country's first constitution was proclaimed, which did not find support among the tribal khans, clergy and peasantry. This led to an anti-government uprising (end of 1928) and a military coup (October 1929), as a result of which the former Minister of War, Mohammed Nadir, was proclaimed the founding king of a new ruling dynasty. The new constitution of 1931 consolidated and ensured the participation of the nobility of the tribes in the administration of the state.

After the start of the 2nd World War 1939-1945. On September 7, 1939, the Afghan government declared neutrality, which it maintained until the end of the war. At the same time, the country's economic situation remained extremely difficult. This caused an increase in anti-government sentiment, especially among the youth and the emerging national bourgeoisie, which, in turn, led to the creation of various opposition parties and groups that dragged its people into a series of government conspiracies, coup d'état, and eventually plunged them into the abyss of civil war. In the mid 1960s. In the armed forces of Afghanistan, from

among the progressive-minded officers, an underground revolutionary army organization was created, which set as its goal the overthrow of the monarchy. In July 1973, the army carried out a coup d'état, as a result of which the monarchy was overthrown in the country and a republican system was established. The new government, headed by Mohammed Daoud, failed to stabilize the country, which led to the emergence of conspiracies involving senior officials, generals and officers, which were unsuccessful. Their

the organizers were executed, and an avalanche of repressions fell upon the country

and the army. In January 1965, the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) was illegally formed in Afghanistan, headed by Nur Mohammed Taraki, and Babrak Karmal became one of the members of the Central Committee. From the very first days of the existence of this party, serious disagreements were outlined between its leaders, which soon led to the expulsion of B. Karmal from the Central Committee and the introduction of H. Amin into its composition. As a result, the party, in fact, split into two parts, which fought independently for their goals. However, opposition to Daoud's policy in both parts of the PDPA, as well as the repression of its members that had begun, forced them to forget about previous differences for a while and unite to fight the regime. On April 27, 1978, power in the country passed into the hands of the PDPA. N.M. became the head of state and prime minister. Taraki, and his deputy - B. Karmal. The

reforms initiated by Taraki also did not find proper support among the members of the government, among the people and in the army. Waves of discontent stirred up new forces and raised new leaders to the surface, the most active of which turned out to be X. Amin, who on October 14, 1979 made another ~~state~~ coup and usurped power in the country. N.M. Taraki was brutally murdered by Amin's supporters. A new wave of repression swept the country and the army. However, this could not ensure the proper viability of the new regime, which was opposed by a hidden government and open armed opposition, the latter gaining more and more strength and scope. The initial basis of the armed opposition was the movement of

Islamic fundamentalists, which arose in the mid-1960s and put forward the idea of reviving the fundamental foundations of Islam and purifying it from later accretions. In 1968, supporters of fundamentalism united in the Muslim Youth Union, which set itself the task of fighting any ruling regime in the country that would condone the modernization of Islam and the penetration of communist ideas into the country. This program placed them in the ranks of the implacable opposition to

in relation to all subsequent regimes that have seized power in Afghanistan for a short or long time.

In June 1975, the fundamentalists tried to overthrow the government of M. Daoud by starting rebel operations in the Panjshir Gorge (100 km north of Kabul) and in a number of provinces of the country. However, government troops defeated the rebels relatively easily, a significant part of which left the country and settled in Pakistan, where they received complete freedom of action. By May 1978, the first base-center was established in Pakistan to train units for armed operations in Afghanistan. Subsequently, similar centers were established in Iran, as well as in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The main source of the formation of the military operations of the fundamentalist detachments was the ever-increasing flow of refugees from Afghanistan, the total number of which by the autumn of 1979 was

several hundred thousand people.

Another powerful source of the formation of the ranks of the armed opposition was the separatist movements of national minorities, which actively resisted the Pashtun majority that had seized power in the country. With the participation of these two forces, an armed uprising began in Nuristan in October 1978; other provinces of Afghanistan.

In the spring of 1979, "Free Nuristan" was proclaimed, and in August, an independent Islamic Khazarajat arose with its army - the "Union of Islamic Warriors" of 3 thousand people. Armed uprisings began against the central government and other nationalities, as a result of which many regions of the country were under the complete control of the rebels, who began to establish their own authorities in the form of "Islamic committees". The fortified armed formations of the opposition went on the offensive in the cities of Herat, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Khost. In summer and autumn, strong unrest swept through the cities of Ghazni, Gardez, Asmar, and others. In June-August, attempts were repeatedly made to raise a rebellion in Kabul and its environs, to capture the capital's airfield. In fact, in 1978 and 1979 a real civil war was raging in the country. And

none of the opposing sides could count on a quick victory without significant outside help. Under these conditions, the ruling circles, despite their frequent change, most of all counted on help from the Soviet Union. The Soviet-Afghan military community has a long history.

Already in 1919, the Soviet government, which approved of the resistance of the Afghan people to the British conquerors, donated one million gold rubles, small arms, ammunition and several aircraft to Afghanistan in the form of gratuitous aid.

In 1924, the USSR again provided military assistance to Afghanistan, supplying it with small arms and aircraft and organizing personnel training for the Afghan army in Tashkent.

Soviet-Afghan military cooperation has been carried out on a regular basis since 1956, after the signing of an appropriate bilateral agreement. The Ministry of Defense of the USSR was entrusted with the task of training national military personnel, and since 1972, of sending up to 100 Soviet military consultants and specialists to the Afghan armed forces. In May 1978, an intergovernmental agreement was signed on military advisers, whose number was increased to 400 people. In December 1978, in Moscow, an agreement on friendship, good neighborliness and cooperation

was concluded between the USSR and the DRA, which allowed the Afghan government to apply to the USSR government with a request to send troops into the country and which then became the legal basis for this. The question of the introduction of Soviet troops into Afghanistan was raised by the government of N.M. Taraki in the spring and summer of 1979, which thus sought to ensure its security and increase the effectiveness of the fight against the rebels. So, on April 14, a request was sent to the Soviet government to allocate 15-20 combat helicopters with crews, and on June 16 - to second crews to tanks and infantry fighting vehicles to protect the Afghan government in Kabul and airports in Bagram and Shindand. According to these requests, on July 7, the paratrooper battalion under the command of

Lieutenant Colonel A. Lomakin, without military equipment, under the guise of technical specialists, was transferred to the airfield in Bagram, thereby practically taking over its protection. Paratroopers

reported directly to the chief military adviser and did not interfere in the affairs of the Afghan side. A month later, the conversation

was no longer about individual crews and subunits, but about units and formations. On July 19, the Soviet leadership was asked to send two motorized rifle divisions to Afghanistan, and the next day, an airborne division directly to Kabul. These requests were repeated in various versions in the following months, until December 1979, but the Soviet government was clearly in no hurry to

their implementation.

In early December, USSR Minister of Defense Marshal of the Soviet Union D.F. Ustinov informed a narrow circle of officials of the Ministry of Defense about the possibility of a decision by the political leadership of the country to send Soviet troops into Afghanistan. On December 10, the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR received an order to prepare an airborne division for landing by landing method and to increase the combat readiness of two motorized rifle divisions. Thus, the foundation was laid for the creation of a grouping of troops of the future 40th Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Yu.V. Tukharinov. It was decided to appoint the final decision on the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan was made in the Kremlin behest of several Soviet on December 12, 1979. On the same day, at the rulers, a huge country, its many millions of people, the Armed Forces of the USSR were drawn into a difficult ten-year and practically futile war, which did not not only did not bring the desired victory, but also became one of the factors in the death of the Soviet Union.

undeclared war

Despite the fact that the operational decision to send a limited contingent of Soviet troops to Afghanistan was made just 13 days before it began, individual units began to arrive there as early as December 1979. However, the purpose of this action was not explained.

To coordinate the activities of representatives of all Soviet departments in Afghanistan, the Soviet apparatus and troops, on December 13, 1979, an operational group of the USSR Ministry of Defense was formed, headed by the First Deputy Chief of the General Staff, General of the Army S.F. Akhromeev, who immediately left for Kabul. There, Soviet military representatives got acquainted with the situation in more detail and approved the entry plan.

His plan was to carry out the introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan along two ground and one air routes, the rapid occupation of all vital regions of the country and the success of the next coup d'état. Before the commander of the 40th Army, Lieutenant General Yu.V. Tukharinov,

the plan for the introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan was finalized on December 13 in the office of the commander of the Turkestan military district, Colonel-General Yu.P. Maksimov. By this time, the backbone of the administration and headquarters of the army was formed from the officers and generals of the headquarters and services of the Turkestan military district. Major General A.V. was appointed a member of the Military Council - head of the association's political department. Toskaev, Chief of Staff, Major General L.N. Lobanov, head of intelligence, Major General A.A. Korchagin. Wasting no time, they began intensive preparation of troops for the upcoming entry, which took place almost openly. The assigned staff was mobilized. At the training grounds, combat coordination of units was continuously going on: in the Temrez region, crossings across the Amu Darya were being prepared. The general directive for mobilization and

readiness was not given. The troops were alerted by separate orders after receiving the appropriate oral instructions.

Ministry of Defense of the USSR. In total, about 100 formations, units and institutions were deployed and understaffed to full staff. For this, more than 50 thousand officers, sergeants and soldiers were called up from the reserve. First of all, combat formations and units were completed; the rear and repair units and bodies of the 40th army were mobilized last, some already during the beginning of the introduction of troops. For the Turkestan and Central Asian military districts, this was the largest mobilization deployment in all the post-war years. The time for crossing the state border by the Minister of Defense of the USSR was set at 15.00 Moscow time (16.30 Kabul time) on December 25, 1979.

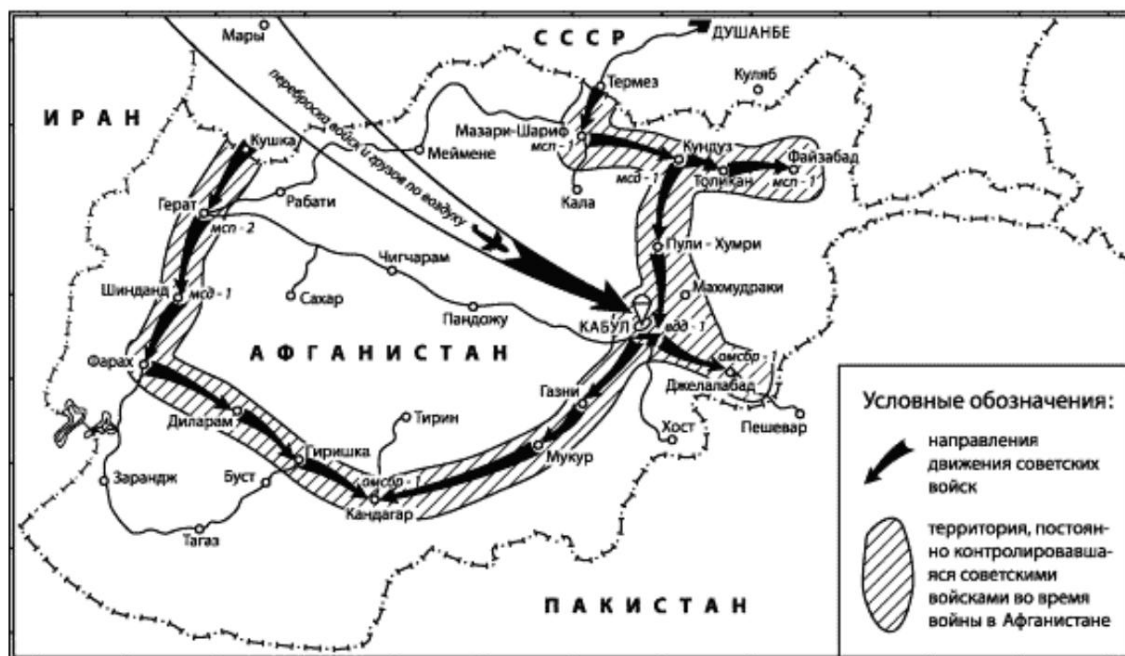
By the appointed time, everything was ready. The day before, Marshal of the Soviet Union S.L., First Deputy Minister of Defense of the USSR, arrived at the command post of the 40th Army from Moscow. Sokolov. The commander of the troops of the Turkestan military district, Colonel-General Yu.P. Maksimov. They gave the commander a signal about the beginning of the entry of Soviet

troops into Afghanistan. In the evening twilight, the vanguard battalion of a motorized rifle regiment on an infantry fighting vehicle of the 108th motorized rifle division (commander Colonel V.I. Mironov) approached the crossings across the Amu Darya, which almost immediately overcame the pontoon bridge and deepened into the territory of the neighboring state. It was followed during the night by the main body of the division. Having made a march, by the end of December 27 they concentrated in the areas of Baghlan, Kunduz, Puli-Khurmi, Deshi. At this time, unexpectedly, the formation was given a new task - to change the route of movement and enter Kabul by 17.00 the next day. By air, the transfer of the main forces of the 103rd Guards Airborne Division under the command of I.F. Ryabchenko. A parachute regiment was sent to E

At 19.30, the paratroopers seized all the key political and military facilities in Kabul and on its outskirts, thus preventing the approach of troops loyal to Amin to the capital. The arriving Soviet troops strengthened the protection of important administrative facilities, airfields, radio and television centers. On the night of December 28, another, 201st motorized rifle division, entered Afghanistan in the direction of Herat, parts of which took control of the highway connecting the cities

Herat and Shindad, and subsequently its area of responsibility expanded to Kandahar.

By mid-January 1980, the entry of the main forces of the 40th Army was basically completed. Two motorized rifle and one airborne divisions, airborne assault brigades and two separate regiments were fully concentrated on the territory of Afghanistan. In their composition, there were approximately 52 thousand people. It was assumed that this amount would be enough to ensure the life of Afghanistan. It was believed that when entering and disposing, Soviet troops would not have to conduct hostilities, since the very presence of Soviet troops would have a sobering effect on the rebels. Soviet military assistance was then regarded as a moral factor in supporting the people's power.



The entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan served as a signal and ensured the successful implementation of the government coup. On December 27, Amin was overthrown and executed by a small group of conspirators. Babrak Karmal became the prime minister of the republic and the general secretary of the Central Committee of the PDPA. The first step of the new government was the release of 15 thousand political prisoners from prisons and calls for refugees to return to their homeland. However, these measures did little to normalize the situation in the country, the majority of whose population accepted the arrival of foreigners without ent

troops. This was immediately taken advantage of by the opposition, which in the person of B. Karmal saw not only a political opponent, but also a protege of Moscow. Linking the two causes together, the oppositionists stepped up their activities throughout almost the entire territory of Afghanistan, soon bringing it to open armed uprisings, primarily against the Soviet troops. According to the

nature of the military-political tasks being solved and the peculiarities of the armed struggle, the combat operations of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan can be conditionally divided into four periods. The first period (December 1979 - February 1980) included the introduction of a limited contingent of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, its placement in garrisons, the organization of protection and defense of permanent deployment points and the most important military and economic facilities, as well as the conduct of military operations to ensure

solutions to these problems. Already during the introduction and deployment of Soviet troops were forced to engage in hostilities with the enemy. A direct participant in those events, Lieutenant Colonel Mamykin Nikolai Ivanovich, recalls: "At the first stage of their stay in Afghanistan, Soviet troops were in garrisons and did not take part in hostilities. However, they were subjected to shelling by the opposition. Even without taking part in the hostilities, the units suffered losses and were forced to return fire. The Afghan servicemen believed that in the conditions of the presence of the Soviet Armed Forces in the country, all responsibility for the fate of the revolution should fall on them. Such sentiments were also expressed by B. Karmal, who from the very beginning asked the leadership of the Operational Group of the USSR Ministry of Defense to involve Soviet troops in active hostilities, since he did not rely on his army. These requests have taken their toll. The command of the Soviet troops was ordered to start hostilities together with the Afghan units. It was believed that the main task in defeating the opposition should be solved by the Afghan army, and the Soviet troops should contribute to the fulfillment of this task. The winter of 1980 was difficult for the Soviet soldiers. Hopes that the main tasks of the

armed struggle against the opposition will be solved by the Afghan army have not justified themselves. Despite a number of measures to increase its combat readiness, the government

the army remained weak and incapacitated. Therefore, the Soviet troops bore the brunt of the fight against the armed opposition detachments. The rebel formations acted against the Soviet troops with relatively large forces and did not avoid direct confrontation with them. This made it possible to defeat large counter-revolutionary groups in the areas of Faizabad, Talikan, Takhar, Baghlan, Jalalabad and other cities.



The leaders of the Afghan opposition, faced with a powerful real force, quickly came to the conclusion that if large groups remain unchanged, they will be defeated. Abandoning the tactics of large forces, they divided all their formations into groups and detachments of 20 to 100 people and switched to partisan operations. In this regard, the questions of the use of forces and means in the fight against small, extremely mobile groups of dushmans who used maneuver tactics of action arose before the Soviet troops in a new way. Attempts by the command to organize an attack on the detachments of dushmans by large military formations according to the rules of classical warfare and the pursuit of their effect did not bring. There were flaws in the preparation of Soviet troops on a number of issues.

Own extensive experience in the fight against Basmachi in Central Asia

was completely forgotten. The later rich experience of fascist Germany during the 2nd World War and the armies of other countries in carrying out counter-guerrilla operations in local wars has hardly been studied. Therefore, the Soviet soldiers sent to Afghanistan were forced, through trial and error, to reshape the military art of fighting an enemy they were not used to. This reduced the effectiveness of military operations, led to unjustified losses. So, according to the memoirs of the former assistant to the operational department of the division, Nikolai Ivanovich Antonov, during the operation in February 1980, the enemy skillfully used the miscalculations made by the Soviet command. Thus, the absence of side guards on the march in the mountains when advancing to the place of the operation turned into significant losses. The enemy, having let the reconnaissance group and one of the companies of the battalion, which was moving behind the reconnaissance group, attack the company, which was in the center of the column. The shelling was carried out from two sides. According to the intensity of the fire, it was determined that the enemy grouping consisted of 60-80 people. The actions of the enemy were so unexpected that the commanders of all levels showed confusion and no command was given to open at least return fire. And then, when such a command was given, the enemy left his positions and left with impunity.

Nevertheless, in the first period, most of the forces and means of the Soviet troops were involved in solving problems related to the protection of sensitive zones and communications. This task was performed by up to 35% of OKSV. The next task was related to the protection and defense of objects of Soviet-Afghan economic cooperation, the protection of airfields and the wiring of columns. As we can see, all tasks were specific. The Soviet troops had neither the experience nor the knowledge to carry them out, since the performance of such functions was not and is not envisaged in the process of training officers. There are no recommendations in the statutes and manuals on these issues, so these tasks had to be solved practically by trial and error. Great difficulties in solving

various operational tactical tasks arose in connection with the unsettled life of the Soviet troops. Due to the fact that in advance the base for accommodation

a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was not prepared; at the beginning of 1980, only a small part of the arriving units and subunits were able to settle in more or less comfortable military camps. Most of the troops remained in the field in tent cities. To prevent a surprise attack by the enemy, outposts were posted and mining was carried out in threatened directions.



Practical redeployment of troops from one area to another was practiced. At the same time, due to the fact that minefields were not always removed, there were cases when Soviet soldiers were blown up on their own mines.

The second period of the OKSV's stay in Afghanistan (March 1980 - April 1985) is characterized by the introduction of active large-scale hostilities, mainly on their own, as well as together with Afghan formations and units. It began with the fact that the 40th Army was reinforced by the 5th Guards. motorized rifle division and two separate regiments. The total number of Soviet troops reached 81.8 thousand people (including 61.8 thousand people in combat units of the ground forces and the Air Force). These forces included about 600 tanks, 1500 infantry fighting vehicles, 2900 armored personnel carriers, 500 aircraft and helicopters, 500 artillery pieces of various calibers.

The opposition, having suffered a number of major military defeats in the first period of the war, moved the main groupings of its troops to hard-to-reach mountainous regions, where it became practically impossible to use modern equipment. In addition, they skillfully began to hide among the local population. The rebels skillfully used various tactics. So, when meeting with superior forces of the Soviet troops, they, as a rule, evaded the battle. At the same time, the dushmans did not miss the opportunity to deliver a sudden blow, mainly using small forces. In fact, during this period, the detachments of the armed opposition abandoned the positional struggle and maneuver actions were widely used. And only in those cases when the situation forced them, battles were fought. This happened when defending bases and base areas, or when the rebels were blocked and they had no choice but to take the fight. In this case, the blockaded detachments went into close combat, which practically excluded the use of aviation and sharply narrowed the possibilities for using artillery, especially from closed firing positions. Under these conditions, the Soviet troops were required to look for new forms and methods of

defeating the enemy. It was determined that only the elimination of base areas could lead to certain results. The focus was on this issue. True, its implementation required a significant amount of manpower and resources. Considering that a large percentage of the troops were involved in other tasks, it was difficult to complete such a task with the forces of one formation. Most often, it was required to combine the efforts of several formations and create a single operational control link (army headquarters). This form of military action was called "combat operation", or, in a broader sense of the word, simply "operation". The modern military-scientific interpretation of the term "operation" means a set of battles, battles and strikes, coordinated and interconnected in purpose, place and time,

carried out in a theater of operations (theater of operations) or a strategic (operational) direction according to a single concept and plan for solving strategic and operational tasks. According to the experience of the Great Patriotic War, the minimum number of troops participating in the operation was

70-100 thousand people. In Afghanistan, "operation" was understood as somewhat different methods and forms of troop action. Depending on which formations the forces were involved in and who led their combat operations, operations were divided into army, divisional, and even regimental ones. To carry out an army operation, as a rule, the forces of one or two motorized rifle, as well as artillery, engineering and sapper thousand units and landing units were involved - a total of 10-15 people. It was planned by the headquarters of the army, and the leadership of the fighting was carried out by the army command. Divisional and regimental operations were carried out mainly by forces of formations and units under the leadership of their commanders. The fighting covered most of Afghanistan. They were especially active along the main highway and near the eastern Afghan-Pakistani border.



Transition from 1981–1982 mainly to raid maneuver operations as part of separate reinforced battalions with the widespread use of coverage and detours and landing by helicopters of air assault groups was evidence of the accumulated experience and increased combat skills of commanders and troops. But they often did not give the desired results. Major Petrov S.N., who repeatedly participated in such operations during this period, recalls that mobile small detachments of dushmans, who knew the area well and

those who enjoyed support among the local population, as a rule, found ways and opportunities to get out of the attack in advance. So, for example, the commander of the parachute regiment was given the task of destroying a well-armed group of rebels numbering up to 40 people in the province of Parwan. The regiment commander decided to carry out this task with the forces of the 3rd paratrooper battalion. On the night of March 20, 1982, the battalion commander decided to covertly advance to the area of the village of Arkhalkheil and, blocking it with two paratrooper companies, combed the village with one company. It was planned to have one parachute company in the reserve. With the outset of the battle, the battalion supported an artillery battalion and two pairs of Mi-24 helicopters.

On the night of March 20, the battalion began to march along the route Bagram - Arkhalheil. In front of him, at a distance of 300 m, a combat reconnaissance patrol advanced. The route passed along a wide straight road, along which a duval stretched on the left, and on the right a concrete canal 5 m wide and up to 2.5 m deep. the survivors seek salvation in the canal. From the house, located 150 meters from the ambush site, a machine gun opened fire along the canal. The battalion column stopped, and its commander called in artillery fire and helicopters. And only after the rebels ceased fire, was a maneuver carried out by units in order to cover the enemy, including the reserve. But the enemy, having opened hurricane fire, took advantage of the system of karezes and carried out a withdrawal. The pursuit and continuation of hostilities no longer made sense. At this time, a number of shortcomings of heavy military equipment were identified, which turned out to be of little use in mountainous terrain. Tanks, infantry

fighting vehicles and self-propelled artillery mounts were tied to the roads and had no operational space for their use. Modern high-speed jets were often unable to effectively support ground forces with air strikes. The use of combat helicopters, which at first became the most effective means of fighting dushmans in the mountains, was significantly limited with the advent of the latter.

man-portable anti-aircraft missile systems "Stinger". All this was not long in affecting the effectiveness of operations and battles, which often did not achieve their intended goals. For the

Soviet command, it became more and more obvious that it would not be possible to completely defeat the rebels in a short time by the forces of the OKSV. The main reasons for military failures, the persistence and even a certain expansion of the scale of the guerrilla war of the Afghan Mujahideen lay not in the military sphere, but in the political one. The Parchamists who came to power, headed by Barbak Karmal, did not justify the hopes placed on them. Having rehabilitated those convicted by Amin, the new leadership itself embarked on the path of violence and oppression. Ill-considered and premature transformations in the countryside led to an increase in discontent. The Afghan army, despite its numerical increase and the saturation of units with Soviet military equipment and weapons, remained almost incapacitated in the conditions of political instability in the country. Therefore, the very logic of circumstances drew the Soviet troops deeper and deeper into the course of the

civil war. Having sent its troops into the territory of Afghanistan, the Soviet the government and the Soviet military command did not take into account the national historical factors of this country, its centuries-old history of struggle against various conquerors. The notion that any foreigner who enters the country with a weapon is a foreign occupier that must be fought is firmly entrenched in the mind of the Afghan. The military command made another mistake. Initially, among the fighters of the Soviet units introduced into Afghanistan, a large percentage were representatives of the Central Asian peoples. Obviously, the command proceeded from considerations that the soldiers of these nationalities would find greater understanding among the kindred inhabitants of Afghanistan. However, this actually had the opposite effect. The Pashtun tribes, which have become an active part of the anti-government movement, have historically always been at enmity with national minorities from the north. The appearance of Uzbeks, Tajiks and Turkmens was an additional irritating factor, which was skillfully used by agitators and propagandists of the counter-revolution. The forces of the armed opposition were growing. So, if in 1981-1983. on the territory of Afghanistan, the number of active armed formations of the Mujahideen

was about 45 thousand people, then in 1985 it was already 150 thousand people. They controlled all the main agricultural areas of the country. The combined Afghan-Soviet armed forces operating in Afghanistan, numbering about 400 thousand people (of which about 100 thousand were Soviet troops), mainly controlled the cities and the highways connecting them. The scale and intensity of the armed

struggle of the opposition was constantly growing, which more and more often took the form of maneuverable offensive and defensive actions of large semi-regular formations. From the second half of 1984, attempts were made to create "Islamic regiments" consisting of 3-5 battalions on the basis of individual bands of the Mujahideen. The total strength of the regiment was 500–900 men. Regiments were sometimes combined into "fronts", in which there were from one to several thousand people. In service, in addition to small arms, there was mountain artillery, mortars, rockets. In the hard-to-reach mountainous terrain, the rebels created base areas with a well-organized multi-tiered system of fire and engineering barriers to accommodate their formations. The main force of the rebels were regional groups and detachments. Their goals, organizational

forms and tactics of warfare were determined by local tribal and religious authorities - "field commanders", and the zone of action was limited to the areas of residence of the Mujahideen. These formations, as a rule, did not have a permanent composition and organization. In case of danger, dushmans dissolved among the local residents, which made their identification almost impossible. The composition of detachments and groups in social and ethnic terms was heterogeneous. Such formations included residents of one national-ethnic group. In most cases, their commanders did not have constant contact with foreign organizations of the Afghan counterrevolution, but the main advantage was the active support of the local population.



Semi-regular formations were usually created at the bases and in the camps of Pakistan and Iran from Afghan refugees. They had good military revenue and were sufficiently armed. The actions of these formations were not tied to one area and were highly maneuverable. Detachments and groups received specific tasks, after which, as a rule, they returned to their bases for understaffing, rearmament and rest. According to Western sources, their number was no more than 5-8% of the total number of forces of the Afghan opposition. These groups included many declassed elements, and the actions themselves were predominantly violent in relation to the local population (forced conscription, robberies, murders, etc.). By their actions, they erected a wall of a certain alienation between the opposition and the Afghan people. The formations of this category were emigrant opposition organizations of different class composition, political goals and platforms, torn apart by internal contradictions and ideological struggle, due to which their main weakness was the lack of coordination, and often even military confrontation among themselves. The terrorist groups operating in the cities were also an integral part of the armed formations of the counterrevolution. They

possessed an extensive network of deeply hidden cells. Along with the implementation of terrorist acts, sabotage, sabotage, inspiring mass riots, the leaders of the underground had the task of infiltrating the party state apparatus, the army and special services in order to undermine state power from within.

During this period, one of the main tasks of the fight against the armed opposition was to deprive it of sources - replenishment by returning Afghan refugees to their homeland. But the resolution of this problem directly depended on the fidelity of the chosen general political course of the government. In practice, as a result of gross errors, the number of refugees not only did not decrease, but even increased and amounted to about 5 million people in the second period. All attempts made to block by military means the entry of fresh Mujahideen into the territory of Afghanistan

didn't give.

The realization that the main means of combating the armed opposition should not be the military actions of regular troops, but the thoughtful organizational and propaganda measures of the authorities, led to a well-known socio-economic, political And modification of the tactics of the actions of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan - their refusal to conduct numerous "field" operations against individual detachments and groups of dushmans and focusing the main efforts on holding strategically important areas and ensuring the operation of communications, on which the issues of supplying the local population with necessary products and goods directly depended. However, in practice, this policy did not always give the desired results, mainly due to the weakness of local government. The result of many operations of the Soviet and Afghan troops was the creation in the counties and volosts of state authorities, called orgyadry. They included representatives of the PDPA, ministries of state security, internal affairs, some other departments, as well as persons from

among the leading employees of public organizations, representatives of the clergy who support the government of Afghanistan. To ensure the safety of the work of the organizational unit, it included an army unit (as a rule, up to a platoon). The trouble with such an organization was

that it was small in number and had no real power. Its leaders did not know how to conduct political work with the local population, they did not enjoy authority. The influence of the *orgyadr* was limited, as a rule, to the village in which it was located. After the completion of the operation, the troops left the occupied area and returned to their places of permanent deployment or moved to other areas of combat operations. In their place, the surviving rebels returned, rebuilt their bases and drove out or destroyed the *orgyadra*. This was repeated many times. For example, in the valley of the Panjshir River in the second period, 6 military operations were carried out, but government power in this area was not consolidated. By the end of 1981, the activity and results of hostilities were to a certain extent affected by a large separation of personnel, about 40% of which was thrown into solving the tasks of protecting objects and normalizing the life and life of a limited contingent of Soviet troops. First of all, it was necessary to build and improve numerous military camps. This required a large amount of building materials and other equipment, which was mainly delivered from the territory of the USSR. The flow of goods has increased sharply. To cope with the tasks of ensuring the construction and replenishment of all necessary supplies for the OKSV, a large number of support battalions are deployed. So, by December 1, 1981, eight separate support battalions operated in the army, which were located in Bagram, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Surubi, Shindad, Kabul, Ghazni and Kunduz. But these forces, as practice has shown, were not enough. In March 1984, two separate support battalions were additionally formed in Kabul and Kunduz. Consequently, taking into account a separate support battalion located in Kabul, and an army material support brigade located in the city of Puli-Khurmi back in the first period, by the end of the second period these forces turned out to be sufficient to cope with the tasks assigned to them. This is eloquently evidenced by such facts as the arrangement of the garrisons of the location of the OKSV. In almost every garrison, conditions were created not only for normal rest, but also other issues of life were successfully resolved (washing facilities, libraries, clubs, etc. were deployed). Improved the security system of the troops stationed

in the garrisons. For this purpose, the approaches to the garrisons were covered with minefields, security guards were posted on the access roads, in addition, the protection of objects inside the garrisons was established.

In the third period of their stay in Afghanistan (April 1985 - January 1986), the troops of the 40th Army came out, having the most numerous composition. The grouping of their ground troops included four divisions, five separate brigades, four separate regiments and six separate battalions. As part of these forces, there were about 29 thousand units of military equipment, of which up to 6 thousand tanks, armored personnel carriers, infantry fighting vehicles.

To ensure the actions of troops from the air, the commander had four aviation and three helicopter regiments at his disposal. The total number of OKSV personnel reached 108.8 thousand people, including 73 thousand in combat units.

have changed.

In connection with the change of leadership in the USSR, for the first time they spoke openly about the Afghan war as a harmful phenomenon imposed on the country and people by a small group of old politicians. In this regard, there has been a tendency towards the constant elimination of Soviet troops from active combat activities, a decrease in the frequency and scale of their operations and battles, and the narrowing of the boundaries of controlled areas. Frequent operations began to be carried out by Afghan units, and the Soviet side carried out their aviation, artillery and engineering support. Only in exceptional cases did the Soviet command go to large-scale operations. An example of this is the operation carried out in 1986 to defeat a well-equipped Mujahideen base in the Khost district.

During this period, the Afghan leadership began work on the creation of armed self-defense units through negotiations with local tribal leaders and elders. Where it was possible to achieve this, anti-government activity ceased and the inhabitants, tired to the limit from the fratricidal war, happily returned to peaceful work. The great political success of the government was the establishment of peace with a number of Pashtun tribes on the border with Pakistan. There have been positive results

in negotiations with local leaders and religious authorities in a number of other parts of the country, especially in the north. Along

with these measures, a lot of work continued to strengthen the armed forces. Measures were taken to strengthen military discipline, a decisive struggle against desertion began, and complete freedom of religion was proclaimed. The regular positions of mullahs were introduced in the army and courses for their training were opened.



The reaction of the government opposition to the reduction in the combat activity of the Soviet troops was ambiguous. On the one hand, they took advantage of this to expand their spheres of influence in the country, primarily by peaceful, ideological means. On the other hand, fearing a way out of the struggle of large masses of the peasantry, tired of the war and striving to return to peaceful life, the Dushman leaders were forced to constantly maintain tension in the country, fanning the flames of civil war. The main active groups were located in the province of Lagar, Nangarhar, Paktia. And in May 1986, under the leadership of the army commander, Major General V.P. Dubynin, a number of operations are being carried out in these provinces, in which Soviet and Afghan troops took part. In the same year, an operation was carried out in the Khost district to defeat the opposition's base area. This operation was planned to be carried out only by the forces of the Afghan troops with the support of Soviet aviation. The deputy head of the operation was appointed

Minister of Defense of the DRA, Major General Nabi Azimi. During the operation, it became clear that, for a number of reasons, the Afghan troops would not be able to solve the problem on their own, and this would lead to a further decline in their morale and authority. And the Soviet troops took part in this operation, covering the flanks and rear of the Afghan group, supporting them with their own fire. When destroying small opposition groups, Afghan troops acted independently. The main event of the third period of the war was the withdrawal from Afghanistan in the second half of 1986 of six regiments of the 40th Army (two motorized rifle, tank and three anti-aircraft missiles). As a result, the number of personnel decreased by 15 thousand people, tanks - by 53 units, infantry fighting vehicles (APC) - by 200 units.

The beginning of the fourth period was laid in December 1986 by the Extraordinary Plenum of the Central Committee of the PDPA, which proclaimed a course towards national reconciliation. By this time, it became clear to sensible people that there was no military solution to the Afghan problem. The adoption of the course of "national reconciliation" reflected the real situation in the country, when it was impossible to achieve an end to the war by military means. However, the implementation of the policy of reconciliation became possible only after the implementation, on the initiative of the Soviet Union, of a whole range of preliminary measures that created the necessary ground for this. The main and decisive step was the decision of the USSR government agreed with the Afghan leadership to begin the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, subject to the cessation of armed assistance to the Afghan rebels from Pakistan and other countries. The new political thinking, which provides for the rejection of military methods of resolving controversial international issues, which was put forward by the Soviet Union, brought the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the negotiating table in Geneva with the participation of the USSR and the USA. The result of these negotiations was the signing of the Geneva Accords on the political settlement of the situation around Afghanistan.

Beginning in January 1987, Soviet troops practically ceased offensive combat operations and fought only if they were attacked by rebels. The exception is the largest joint operation of the Soviet and Afghan troops "Magistral" in 1987, the largest of the war in Afghanistan.

province of Paktia for the delivery of public goods from Gardez to Khost with the defeat of large rebel forces blocking the road, in which the forces of five divisions participated. Subsequently, the actions of the Soviet troops were reduced to control over the main vital sections of the roads, preparing and securing the exit from Afghanistan. In 1988, the Najibullah government searched

frantically for ways to implement the policy of national reconciliation. In party life, the main task was to strengthen and consolidate the ranks of the PDPA. In foreign policy, a course was taken to develop relations with all countries, non-alignment with any blocs. In the military field, measures were continued to turn the army into a force capable of independently protecting the existing power in the country. However, none of the measures taken in practice brought the end of the war closer.

The opposition to the calls of the government's policy of national reconciliation refused. Its leaders declared that they would continue the "jihad" until the last Soviet soldier left the territory of Afghanistan. They intensified propaganda work among the local population, increased the intensity of the armed struggle, carried out a series of terrorist

acts.

A complex and intractable task in the policy of reconciliation and a ceasefire was the issue of relations with Shiite Iran and the armed detachments of its adherents and co-religionists in Afghanistan itself. Iran did not recognize the Four-Party Geneva Agreement, refusing to sign it as a fifth interested party. He did not succumb to the influence of international authorities and was not going to refuse military assistance to the opposition, and also to liquidate centers for the training of the Mujahideen on his territory. Under these conditions, on April 7, 1988, the Soviet government decided on the complete withdrawal of a limited contingent of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. The withdrawal was carried out in two stages. At the first (from May 15 to August 16, 1988), the number of troops was halved. Then, after a three-month break, necessary to solve a number of organizational problems, the second stage began, lasting three months (from November 15, 1988 to February 15, 1989).

The withdrawal of troops at both stages was planned and carried out as a large-scale army operation, in which a large number of forces and means participated. Thanks to this, the withdrawal of troops was carried out successfully. The armed formations of the opposition, preparing for a large-scale struggle for power within the country, did not prevent the formations and units of the 40th Army from leaving. On February 15, 1989, the last part left the territory of Afghanistan. Thus, another page in the history of the long-suffering Soviet people was turned, conceived and started by several politicians in the Kremlin, and written with the blood and sweat of many thousands of ordinary people on the land of Afghanistan.

Armed groups of the opposition

Preliminary undercover intelligence and operational forecasting of the situation, the alignment of government and opposition forces, as well as a number of other factors by the Soviet leadership before the start of the entry of troops into Afghanistan, was extremely superficial. In Afghanistan, Soviet troops met

with an unusual enemy in the face of military formations of the government opposition. They were led by parties and organizations of various political and ideological orientations - from pro-monarchist to ultra-left. The history of their formation and development was quite turbulent.

In the late 1970s, especially after the April Revolution, a large number of Afghan opposition organizations and groups concentrated in the border areas of Pakistan with Afghanistan. From their composition, by June 1981, the Islamic Union of the Mujahideen of Afghanistan (ISMA) was formed. In March 1982, it broke up into the Union of Seven, which united fundamentalist organizations, two parts: and the Union of Three (ISMA-3), which included

traditionalist organizations. In May 1985, both parts united again within the framework of ISMA, creating an organized opposition, called

the Peshawar Seven. Its membership includes: the Islamic Party of Afghanistan, the Islamic Society of Afghanistan, the Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan, the Islamic Party - Kholes wing, the National Islamic Front of Afghanistan and the National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan. Despite the unification, the opposition parties differed significantly from one another in the political programs and goals of the struggle that their leaders put forward, as well as areas of influence.



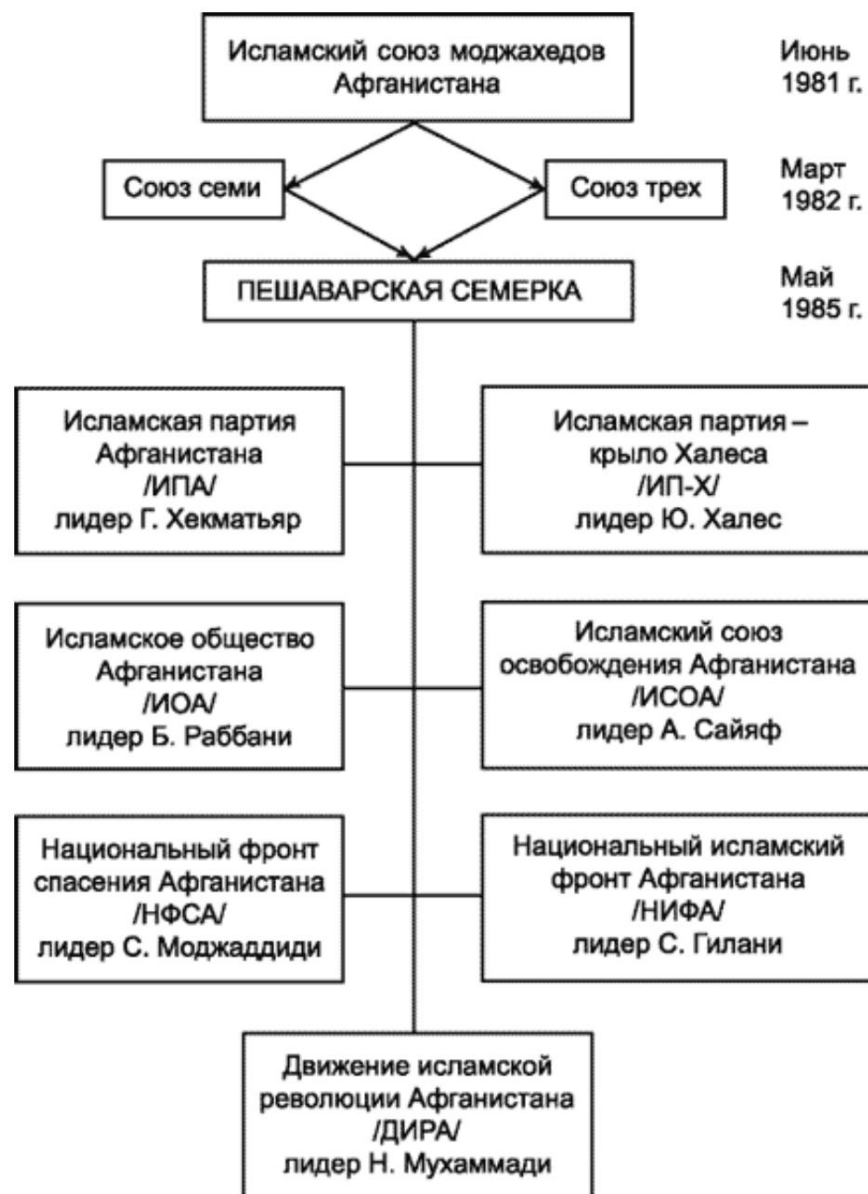
The Islamic Party of Afghanistan (IPA) pursued the goal of establishing an Islamic system in the country and spreading the teachings of Islam throughout the world. The largest number of its supporters were among Tajiks and Pashtuns. This party had the least influence in the southeastern and northern regions of the country. The supreme governing body of the party was the central council (SHURA), headed by the leader of the party, Emir G. Hekmatyar. This man, a Pashtun from the Haruti tribe, was born in 1944 in the Imam Sahib district of the province of Qugduz. He graduated from the engineering faculty of Kabul with a strong will, determination, desire for authoritarian leadership, oratory and cruelty. The Islamic Society of Afghanistan (ISA) party had the same goals as the IPA. However, its national composition was more heterogeneous. The

party included not only Tajiks and Pashtuns, but also Turkmens and Uzbeks. This party had the greatest influence in the province of Herat. Its leader is professor of theology Burkhanuddin Rabbani, a Tajik by nationality, born in 1941. At one time he graduated from the Kabul Theological Lyceum, then the Theological Faculty of Kabul University. It was characterized by pragmatism and flexibility in solving the Afghan problem with the participation of the United States.

The Islamic Party of Afghanistan (M.Yu. Kholes) broke away in 1975 from the IPA. It included a group of elderly mullahs and ulema, far from

modern politics, focused not so much on the political ideas of fundamentalists, but on the fanatical service to Islam in medieval forms. The party was a chauvinist Pashtun group heading for terror, the most barbaric methods of struggle. Its leader is Moulavi Muhamed Yunus Khales, a Pashtun from the Khuchiyani tribe, born in 1920 in the village of Wazir-Khuchiyani, Hamgarhar province. Among the Pashtun tribes, he is known as a religious authority and a Pashtun poet. In 1963–1973 led in Kabul a group of his followers "Tawabani", which consisted of mullahs and carried out propaganda work in the mosques of the city. The Islamic Union for the Liberation of Afghanistan (ISLA) came into existence in March 1982. The organization was created with the consent of other fundamentalist leaders in order to outnumber traditionalist

organizations within the ISMA alliance. Its leader, a professor of theology, Abburrasul Sayyaf, was born in 1945 in the Paghman district of the Kabul province into a poor peasant family. He graduated from the theological faculty of Kabul V quantity fundamentalist University. In above 1970 he went to Egypt to the Muslim University Am-Ahzar, then taught at the Faculty of Theology at Kabul University. After the April Revolution of 1979, he left for Pakistan and joined the fundamentalist opposition. All the time he remained an ardent supporter of G. Hekmatyar.



Major counter-revolutionary parties in Afghanistan

The National Front for the Salvation of Afghanistan (NFSA) was established in Pakistan in 1979. Its goal was to move towards an Islamic society on the basis of justice, equality, adherence to the principle of shura (council) in governing the country, ensuring personal and social freedom in accordance with the foundations of Islam. The front was open to all faithful Muslims, regardless of political and religious views and positions under the previous regimes. Its ranks included ulema, intelligentsia, statesmen and officials of the former regimes, and tribal leaders. Biggest impact front

had in the provinces of Kabul, Logar, Kunar, Nangarhar, Paktia, the border zone of the settlement of the Pashtun tribes. His separate detachments operated in the north in the provinces of Faryab, Takhar, Kunduz. The leader of the NFSA, Sebgatullah Mojaddidi, was born in Kabul in 1925 into a family of hereditary hazrats. Graduated from Cairo Al-Azhar University. The National Islamic Front of Afghanistan (NIFA) was founded in 1978 in

Pakistan by a prominent secular and religious figure, S. Gilani. It was not a modern political organization with a clear program, charter, structure. Most likely, it was a conglomerate of followers, murids of the Gilani family, who from generation to generation continued to consider the head of this family a descendant of the prophet and their spiritual leader. The main contingent of the front is Pashtuns, religiously the front is Sunni. Front leader S. Gilani was born in Kabul in 1931 into a family of hereditary Hazrats of Arab origin, the founders of the famous Muslim order of Qadiriya. Being the head of the order, S. Gilani bore the title of "feast", being considered a descendant of the prophet, had numerous followers in Afghanistan - murids.

The Islamic Revolution Movement of Afghanistan (DIRA) was created in the summer of 1978 in the Pakistani province of Balochistan. In essence, this is an extremely reactionary organization headed by well-known theologians and ulema; the second echelon of leadership represented the middle and lower levels of the ulema and mullahs, who had great influence in rural areas. The founder of the movement Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi was born in 1920 in the province of Logar. He studied the fundamentals of Islam with the ulema of the province. In 1946 he received permission to teach Islam. He established himself as an ardent nationalist and anti-communist, an opponent of progressive forces.

The number of DIRA members is 10 thousand, followers - about 25 thousand. The regions of the greatest activity were the provinces of Kabul, Logar, Ghazni, Paktia, Zabol. Pashtuns predominated in the national composition of the organization. The armed detachments consisted mainly of peasants from the southern regions of Afghanistan. DIRA was characterized by national-democratic intransigence and cruelty especially towards ^{To} towards the civilian population and authorities, those who fell into its hands.

government supporters. The fighters of the armed detachments of the DIRA were distinguished by religious

fanaticism. The organizational structure of all the opposition parties that make up the Peshawar Seven is approximately the same. Each party had its own headquarters, secretariat and the required number of commissions. Apart

from anti-Sovietism and implacable hostility to the government, these organizations and their leaders did not have a common platform. They saw the future of Afghanistan in different ways: some advocated the creation of an Islamic republic, at the head of which they imagined themselves, the latter were inclined to create various forms of an Islamic theocratic state on the territory of Afghanistan. Despite all the attempts of the reactionary Islamic regimes to create a unified political and military structure of the rebellious movement, they did not succeed. Numerous "coalitions" and "unions" were of a temporary nature and were mainly the result of attempts by the secret services to somehow unite the counter-revolutionary movement. The

connection of the party with the masses was carried out through Islamic committees. They included leaders, who in most cases received special training in Pakistan and Iran, as well as local influential religious figures, former feudal lords and large landowners. Islamic committees were stationed, as a rule, in fortresses, which were carefully guarded. The composition of the committees varied. It was determined by the scale of their activities, the size of the population and armed formations in the area of responsibility. In most cases, the leadership consisted of 5 to 30 people. Islamic committees of several villages or volosts were subordinate to the central

committee, which was created in the district. The largest of them united in unions, whose activities extended over a significant territory. The union included 3–7 Islamic committees. The leadership of the parties coordinated the work of the committees and unions by sending instructions and instructions to them, as well as by periodically convening meetings of the leaders of these bodies abroad. Islamic committees organizationally consisted of five departments: administrative, party, military, economic and financial.

The military department planned and directly supervised the combat activities of detachments and sabotage and terrorist groups.

Islamic committees carried out active subversive work among the population and personnel of the Afghan armed forces. The main thing in this work was the organization and conduct of large-scale anti-government and anti-Soviet propaganda with the aim of indoctrination of the population and army personnel, involving them in the armed struggle against the government of Afghanistan and the troops. In addition, these bodies were also involved in the distribution of weapons received from abroad, recruited the male population into detachments, coordinated their combat activities, established and collected taxes from local residents, and recruited into counter-revolutionary Islamic organizations.

The armed forces of Afghanistan were the objects of special attention in the activities of the Islamic committees. Islamic committees carried out active ideological work among the servicemen of formations and units of the Afghan army with the aim of their moral decay, refusing to participate in hostilities and going over to the side of the counter-revolution. The reactionaries prevented the recruitment of young recruits into the army, forced draft-age youth to leave the villages and cities for the mountains by threats and force, and also forcibly recruited them into their armed forces. The counties or parts of the province were generally under the influence of the Islamic committees of

one party. The presence in these places of Islamic committees of more than one party led to "internecine" struggle, which was decided by the armed actions of groups of different party affiliations. There are cases when, in the second and third periods of hostilities in the Kabul province, the leaders of some detachments proposed to the Soviet command plans for joint action to eliminate rebel groups of other party affiliations in order to establish personal control over a certain area of the province.

The armed forces of the opposition had no permanent composition. At various times, their total number ranged from 40 to 60 thousand people. The largest formations, which included up to 85 percent of the opposition troops, were concentrated in the Kabul region, and

also in the central, northeastern, southeastern and southern provinces of the country. The

armed formations of the opposition, as a rule, also did not have a clear organizational and staff structure, with the exception of the "Islamic regiments". "Islamic regiments" were constantly in the border areas of Pakistan and Iran and went to the territory of Afghanistan only to solve specific combat missions, after which they returned back. These units had good weapons, as well as uniform uniforms. Thus, the personnel of one of the "Islamic regiments", which participated in the hostilities in the province of Kunar at the end of the second period, had the latest automatic weapons and were dressed in lightweight black uniforms. Most of the leaders of the Afghan opposition believed that, taking into account the

specifics of the forms of armed struggle and the physical and geographical conditions of the combat areas, the main organizational units of the armed formations should be small groups and detachments. Acting by the method of sudden night raids and attacks, they were able to inflict significant damage on regular troops, units of Tsarandoi, destroy important military, economic and administrative facilities. A combat detachment (group) was the primary tactical unit of the armed opposition forces. It consisted of 15 to 50 people, which included

the commander (leader), 2-3 of his bodyguards, deputy commander, 3-4 scouts (observers), 2-3 combat subgroups of shooters (6-8 people each), 1-2 anti-aircraft machine gun crews, 1-2 mortar crews, 2-3 RPG crews and a mining subgroup (4-5 people). The group was armed with various samples of mainly small arms: in the initial period of hostilities, these were BUR rifles manufactured at the beginning of the century. In subsequent periods, machine guns and machine guns from the times of the 2nd World War and the post-war period were widely used. In addition, in a number of cases, DShK anti-aircraft machine guns were used to combat an air enemy. 60-mm mortars were used as light artillery.

The combat group was located, as a rule, in one village, and weapons and ammunition were hidden nearby. Depending on the

size and armament, the group could perform various combat missions. The main ones were: sabotage on nearby pipelines, power transmission lines), as well as small garrisons (undermining bridges, mining roads; an attack on troops and administrative buildings, not so much for the purpose of destruction, but to keep them in constant tension; participation in hostilities as part of a larger formation. Light armament provided the group with greater maneuverability, and also allowed for a quick exit from the battle and withdrawal in the event of a meeting with superior forces. The detachment was the main tactical unit of the armed opposition forces. Depending on the situation, he could number 150-200 people. The detachment was deployed in one place

(fortress) or dispersed one or two people in the houses of residents of several villages. In addition to small arms, light artillery and anti-aircraft weapons, the detachment could have more effective systems: 82-mm mortars, anti-tank recoilless rifles and 14.5-mm anti-aircraft machine guns. According to the composition of forces and means, the detachment could conduct independent combat operations or be part of larger formations. In addition, the detachment was entrusted with the task of escorting caravans through the territory it controlled. If necessary, the detachment

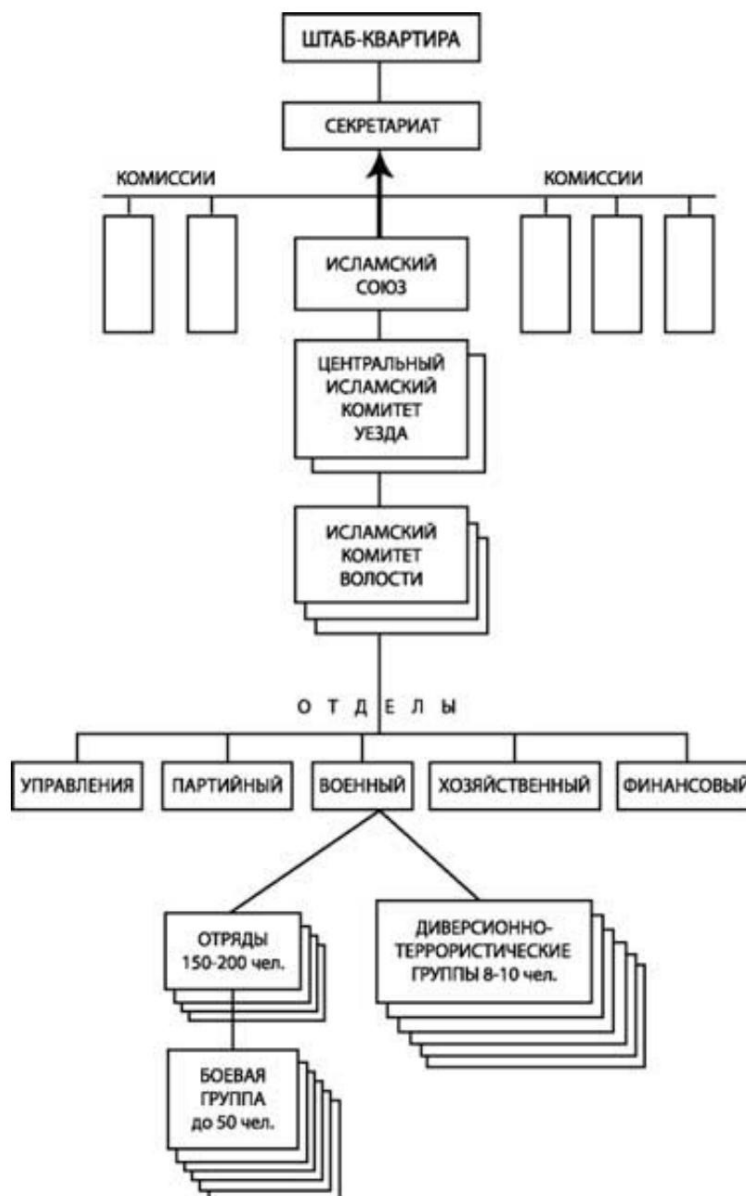
could quickly leave its area of location. At the same time, heavy weapons were hidden in pre-prepared places with careful disguise. In the interior provinces, there were small sabotage and terrorist groups (3-10 people), which consisted mainly of young, well-developed men who underwent 3-6 months of training in training centers abroad. These groups were intended for sabotage and terrorist acts. As a rule, they did not enter into open hostilities.

Many detachments and even groups, if necessary, easily and quickly "dissolved" among the local residents, who themselves were often their members. Between battles, weapons were stored in caches, the location of which was known to a limited number of people. The female half of the house was also often used to store weapons, the entrance to which was for strangers.

strictly prohibited by the Quran. To carry out a combat mission, detachments and groups at a certain time gathered at designated places. They knew the area well and were able to move quickly in the mountains on foot. After completing the task, the weapons were again folded in certain hiding places, and the dushmans themselves, who did not differ in clothes from the local residents, dispersed in their own ways.

villages.

The entire territory of the country was conditionally divided by the rebels into zones, taking into account their use in their own interests. Depending on the conditions, the zones were divided into several types. There were zones controlled by the rebels, from which they carried out sorties to carry out attacks, shelling, ambushes, etc. There were zones where the rebels, dissolving among the population, acted covertly in the performance of assigned tasks. Finally, there were areas under government control where the rebels entered secretly and were there only during the period of hostilities.

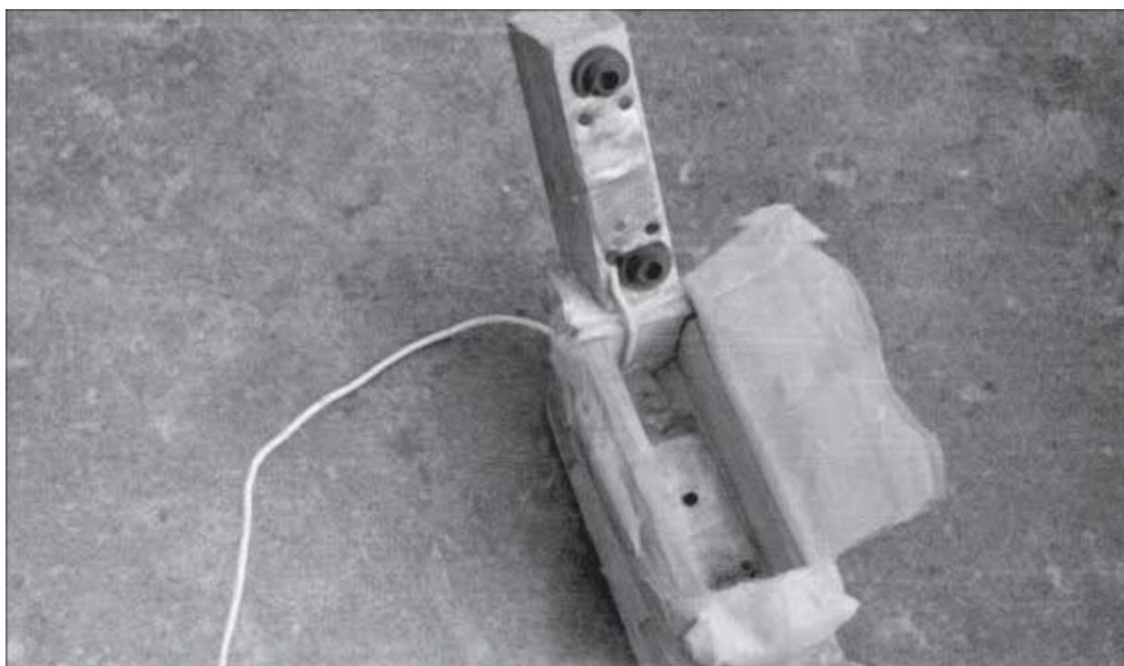


Organization structure of the counter-revolutionary party

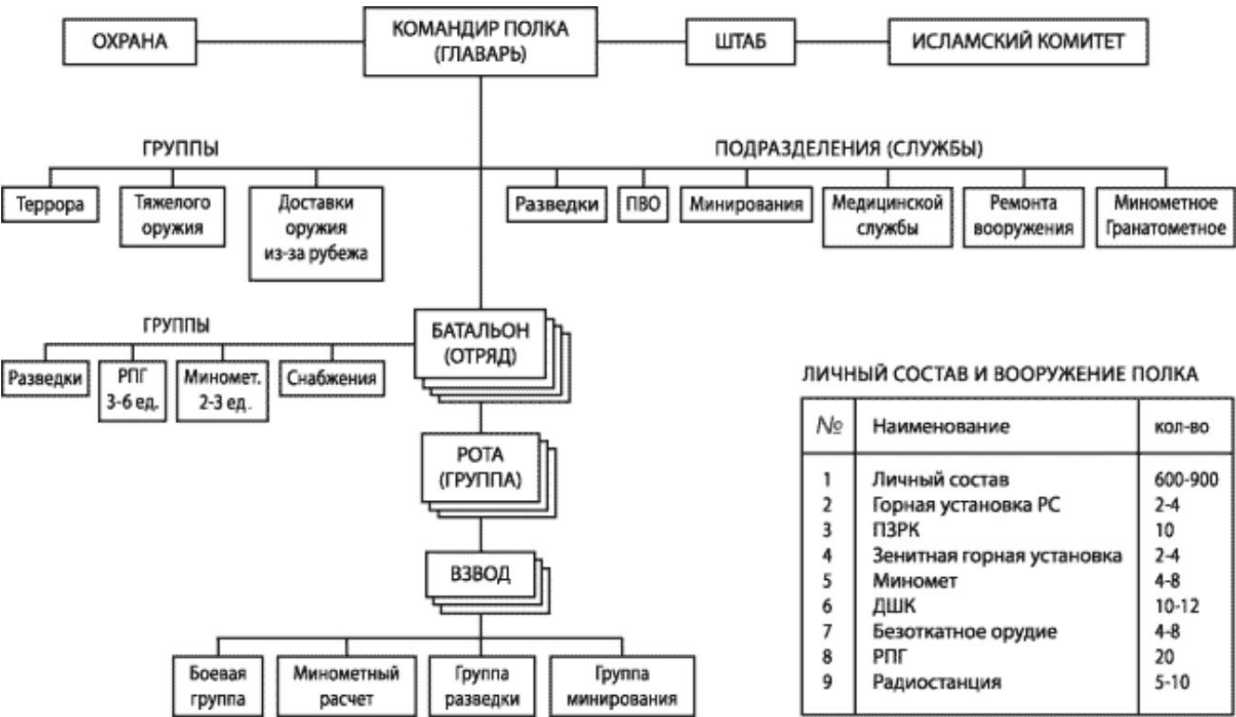
In the areas of responsibility of large opposition groups, base areas were created, located in areas of hard-to-reach terrain near the areas of upcoming operations. They created stocks of means of armed struggle and material and technical means, organized a control system, warning, air defense, there was a center for training rebels, workshops for the repair of weapons and the manufacture of home-made ammunition, a garage, a prison, a hospital, and recreation areas for personnel.

As a rule, up to 500 people could be in such a base area at the same time.

Transshipment bases were organized for temporary storage of weapons, ammunition, materiel and on caravan routes near the borders with Pakistan and Iran. They were intermediate bodies for the supply of groups and detachments, where the distribution and sale of weapons was carried out, an access regime was established, a system of observation, warning, air defense, and security. Sometimes transshipment bases were combined with base areas. There were 18 large supply bases on the territory of Afghanistan, including 9 base areas, two transshipment bases and 7 transshipment points.



The leadership of the opposition attached great importance to the indoctrination of the personnel. It was carried out in the spirit of Islam, nationalism, the personal responsibility of each rebel for the results of the armed struggle. Discipline and responsibility were imposed by the most cruel methods, up to and including the death penalty. The features of the way of life of the Afghan people allowed the rebels to easily endure the hardships and hardships of partisan actions, and to be indifferent to death.

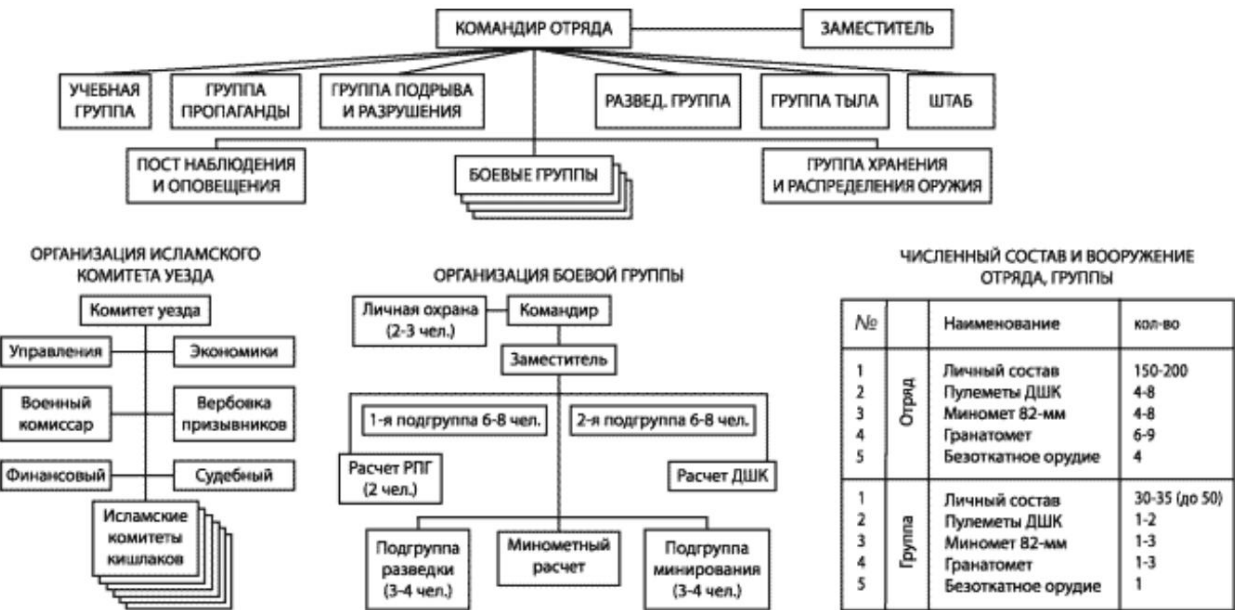


In addition to a fanatical belief in the ideas of fighting the "infidels", dushmans were required to have good military training. With the active financial and material support of the United States and its NATO partners, an extensive network of camps, centers and points was created in Pakistan and Iran, which provided for all forms of education: full-time, course, short-term. The leading cadres of large armed formations were trained at stationary departments in the higher and secondary military educational institutions of Pakistan. More than 100 training centers were created to train leaders, instructors, as well as anti-aircraft gunners, reconnaissance saboteurs, mortarmen, and radio operators. Of these, 78 were in Pakistan, 11 in Iran, 7 in the ARE, and 5-6 in China. The teaching staff of these centers consisted of officers and reservists of the Pakistani armed forces, military specialists from the United States, China, Iran, France, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, England and Japan. The total number of trainees was 15 thousand people, the capacity of training centers was up to 50 thousand. The monthly release of trained saboteurs and terrorists was 2.5-3 thousand.

Human.

In addition to direct assistance through government channels, Washington encouraged the creation of so-called "public"

and "private" organizations and groups that raised funds for subversive purposes waged an active campaign in favor of further expansion of American interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan. The number of these organizations included the Federation of American-Afghan Action, Southern California Aid for Afghan Refugees, Society for a Free Afghanistan, Informal Arms Relief Committee, etc.



Structure, armament and strength of the detachment, group rebels

Their activities were directed and coordinated by US intelligence agencies. These actions were aimed at further escalation of the armed struggle on the part of the counter-revolution, delaying the solution of the so-called "Afghan issue" for a long period. To this end, all the activities of the American administration were carried out simultaneously in a number of areas. The most important of these was the increase in financial assistance needed for the purchase of weapons, ammunition, logistics, as well as the expansion of incentive funds for rebels who participated in hostilities. Pressure was constantly exerted on the leaders of the main counter-revolutionary organizations in order to persuade them to really unite in the struggle against the government and the Soviet troops.

In turn, the intelligence services of the United States and Pakistan constantly tightened control over the activities of armed groups in order to verify the effectiveness of the existing system for supplying them with everything they need and the degree of reliability of the data reported to the headquarters on the results of hostilities, sabotage and terrorist acts. Considerable attention was paid to improving the living conditions of the financial situation of the Afghan refugees, who were the main base for replenishing the ranks of the rebels. In addition, great efforts and funds were directed to improving the means, methods and methods of counter-revolutionary struggle, propaganda and agitation among the rebels, refugees, as well as the Afghan population, primarily

youth.

It should be noted that all the above activities were generally strictly carried out. Summing up the results of the end of the second - the beginning of the third period of hostilities, the leaders of the counter-revolutionary organizations stated that during this period the insurgent movement managed to test new methods of conducting combat operations against the Afghan troops in practice. By concentrating forces and means and conducting intense fire from positions prepared in advance, their detachments and groups were able to exert a serious influence on the conduct of military operations in the southeastern regions, especially at its initial stages and during the withdrawal of troops to the areas of operations. This managed to demonstrate to foreign representatives the ability of the opposition to resist the Afghan troops, subject to an uninterrupted supply of weapons and ammunition. It was noted that the provision of armed formations in the base areas was carried out under the direct control of the leaders of the main parties, as well as with the participation of special commissions of foreign representatives. Thanks to this assistance and strict control, it was possible to begin the widespread transition of armed formations to an organizational structure similar to military units. The leadership of the counter-revolution believed that, on the whole, this process had a positive impact on strengthening the rebellious movement (increased organization, improved management and supply) and in the future would allow the creation of the so-called "Islamic army" to begin.

In solving the problems of armed struggle, experience was gained in the rapid regrouping of groups and detachments with the aim of building up forces and means in the border areas using the territory of Pakistan. This allows us to conclude that in Afghanistan, a limited contingent of Soviet troops was opposed by significant, well-equipped and organized armed forces of the opposition, who were well versed in the tactics of guerrilla warfare in mountainous desert terrain. The tactics of the armed formations of the

government opposition were based on sudden actions of small detachments and groups with the aim of inflicting defeat on enemy units, capturing (even temporarily) individual administrative centers, expanding their zones of influence, replenishing detachments and groups with weapons and ammunition, etc.

Combat actions were divided into offensive (or, as the rebels themselves called them, frontal), defensive, guerrilla, and actions to ensure the life of the troops.

Offensive and defensive combat operations were limited and were used very rarely. Offensive military operations were carried out in order to capture large administrative centers, certain territories and individual objects (posts, military garrisons, important sections of roads, etc.). As a rule, they were planned and carried out in limited provinces, where it was possible to transfer reinforcements from Pakistan in a short time, and in case of failure, go abroad. At the same time, great attention was paid to surprise, initiative, maneuver of forces and means, as well as the independence of military formations in the implementation of plans for the purpose of well-organized reconnaissance and warning. It was noted, in particular, in the province of Kunar, support for the advancing artillery from the territory of Pakistan. When organizing offensive actions, special importance was attached to the choice of the moment, place and direction of the offensive. By maneuvering forces and means, the rebels created superiority over the government troops in a certain area and at the appointed time, after which, as far as possible, they secretly advanced to the line of attack. At the same time, groups went out to other directions,

designed to cover the withdrawal of the main forces after the completion of a combat

mission. Offensive actions, as a rule, were fleeting, especially if they developed unsuccessfully for the rebels. In this case, the dushmans quickly left the battlefield and, under cover of fire and minefields, retreated along pre-selected routes. They avoided the use of a large number of heavy weapons, as it reduced the maneuverability of the actions of groups and detachments. Heavy weapons were used mainly in mountainous areas, because on the plains they could become easy prey for government troops.

Defensive combat actions were envisaged in order to hold bases, bases and other important areas, to ensure the withdrawal of rebels from the blow of government troops, and also in case it was impossible to evade open battle. The defense of base areas, defensive lines and controlled zones was assigned primarily to combat groups and detachments permanently deployed in these areas and zones. Particular attention was paid to the defense of passes, passages and gorges, dominating heights. An important place was given to the defense of settlements.



During the organization of defense, systems of observation, fire and barriers were created. Observation was organized starting from the distant approaches to the defense. When creating a fire system, the protective properties of the terrain were skillfully used. The position of fire weapons was chosen in such a way as to ensure fire maneuver in the horizontal plane, and in the mountains in the vertical plane. They were usually placed in caves and rocky shelters in three tiers. At the dominant heights, mountain anti-aircraft installations and heavy machine guns (DShK) were installed. For them, trenches were built in the form of vertical shafts, which were carefully camouflaged. An important place in the fire system both in the mountains and in settlements was given to snipers and DShK machine guns. For the DShK, open-type positions were equipped, adapted for firing at air and ground targets. Often such positions were concreted and had special slots for sheltering personnel. The slots opened in all directions from the main position and were used to shelter personnel, depending on the direction from which the attacks of aircraft and helicopters took place. The lower tiers housed recoilless rifles and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Mortars and mountain guns were more often located on the upper tiers. The positions of small arms were chosen in such a way that the sectors of fire ensured the defeat of the enemy in the passes through the passes and ridges, in other bottlenecks.

In settlements, the positions of heavy weapons were chosen behind duvals (adobe fences up to 2 m thick and up to 3 m high), in which loopholes were made. Some weapons, especially DShK, were placed on the roofs and upper floors of buildings. Several firing positions were prepared for machine guns, recoilless rifles and RPGs. The approaches to the defense and positions of fire weapons were mined. In the mountains,

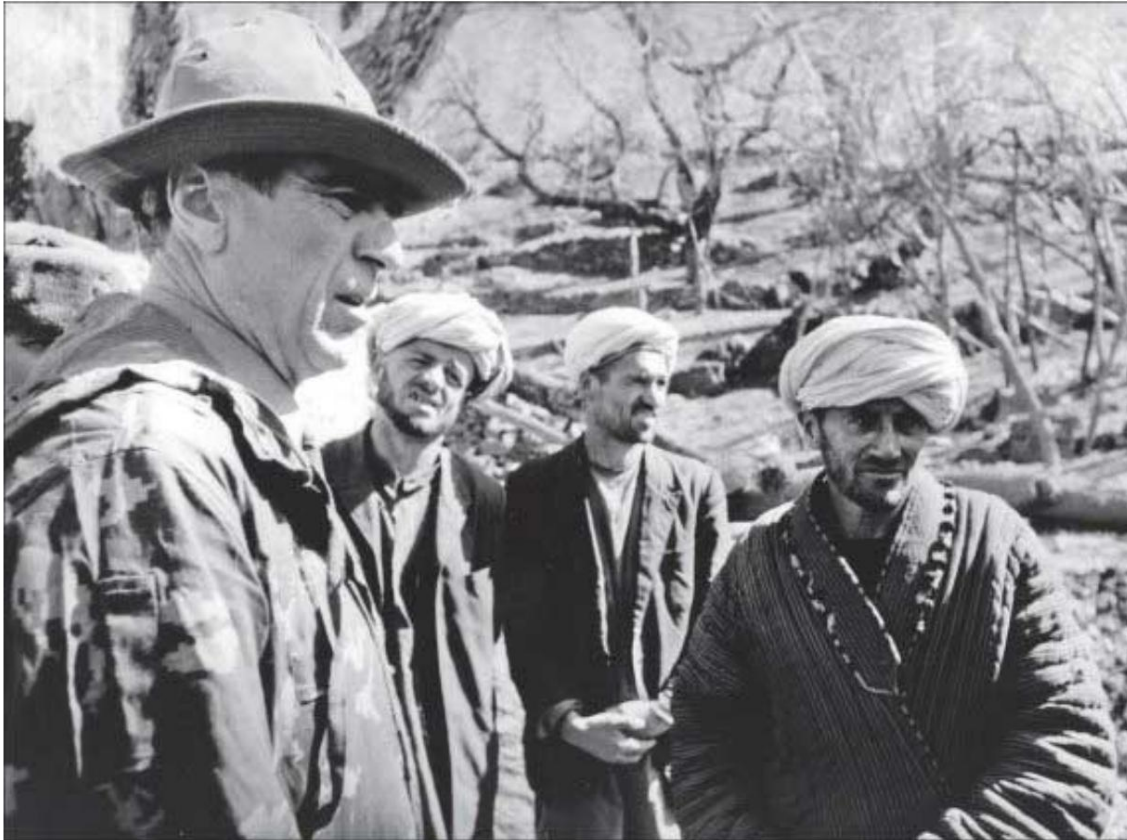
trenches and other structures were made of stones, in settlements - from bags of earth. The positions of fire weapons were carefully camouflaged. For the purpose of camouflage, fire was usually fired from the depths of caves, crevices and

buildings. The rebels fought stubbornly in the mountains. During air raids and artillery shelling, they took refuge in special structures, and at the end of the raid (shelling) they again took their positions. Defeat

the rebels inflicted concentrated fire on the advancing troops. False withdrawal was often used to draw the enemy into prepared fire bags. To hide the true system of fire, the fire of distracting groups was used. If the enemy had a significant superiority, the spooks, after a short shelling of the attackers, retreated along pre-planned routes to a new assembly point (defense line). Withdrawal from occupied positions was carried out under cover of fire from previously

prepared positions or ambushes, as well as mine-explosive obstacles. During the defensive battle, the rebels, using the knowledge of the area, skillfully got out of the encirclement. Often the exit was carried out at night by seeping through the battle formations of the advancing troops. After leaving the encirclement, groups and detachments occupied new advantageous positions, if possible behind enemy lines. In the latter case, they suddenly opened fire in the back. The main bet was made on the fire of snipers and DShK.

When defending a settlement with enemy troops approaching it, the rebels opened concentrated fire from all means. After that, they retreated to the depths of the village, where they occupied a new line of defense in residential buildings and behind the adobe walls of the duvals. Subsequently, the defeat of the personnel and military equipment of the enemy was inflicted in close combat on the narrow and crooked streets of the settlement, where the effective use of combat vehicles, artillery and aviation became practically impossible. In this regard, the battles in the settlements became especially fierce and were fought, as a rule, with heavy losses on both sides.



Partisan fighting lay at the heart of the opposition's armed struggle with state power. They were conducted throughout the country not only by armed formations, but also with the involvement of a significant part of the population. Their goal was to defeat government agencies and troops, wear them out, and thereby drastically weaken state power as a whole. Partisan actions included ambushes, raids, shelling of military and national economic facilities, mining roads, sabotage and terrorist actions and other actions. The intensity of the use of forms of guerrilla warfare was not the same for the seasons.

The greatest intensification of hostilities, with the exception of road mining, occurred in spring and summer. This is explained by the fact that in winter most of the passes were closed to caravans. Significant difficulties were created in supplying the opposition with material resources. In addition, a large snow cover in the mountains forced dushmans to descend into the valleys for the winter-autumn period and dissolve among civilians. combat intensity

the impact also decreased during sowing and harvesting (2–3 crops were harvested per year) due to the fact that the rebels, or most of them, were directly involved in agricultural work.

The guerrilla actions of the rebels were prepared and carried out on the basis of thorough reconnaissance of the enemy. In each province, a clear system of surveillance of Soviet and government troops was created, which was based on a wide network of informants among the local population, military units and government agencies. Information about the beginning of the formation of marching columns, the times and directions of their movement was immediately transmitted to the Islamic committees. The latter planned the military operations of the troops or took measures to evacuate the detachments, temporarily bury weapons, ammunition and materiel. During the armed struggle, the opposition forces used various methods of military operations, the main of which were ambushes, raids, and shelling. Mining, sabotage and terrorist activities and hostilities associated with the escort of caravans were also widely practiced.

Ambush actions were carried out with the aim of disrupting the supply of national economic and military goods, seizing materiel, weapons, ammunition, as well as the physical destruction of military personnel. Cases of their device were especially frequent. So, in just three years (from 1985 to 1987), more than 10 thousand ambushes were recorded.

Ambushes, as a rule, were arranged on roads passing through passes, gorges and other narrownesses. In the mountains, ambush positions were arranged on the slopes or ridges of heights, the entrance or exit from the gorge, on the pass sections of the roads. In the "green zones" they were organized in places where government and Soviet troops were likely to rest or in the areas of their expected actions. In this case, the defeat was inflicted by fire both from the front and from the flanks. Ambushes took place, which were arranged at several lines as the troops advanced, both in columns and in battle formations. In populated areas, ambushes were carried out behind adobe fences, in houses in such a way as to lure

the enemy into the "fire bag" - a place where the road becomes narrow or dead end.

Usually ambushes were organized at night. However, there were also daytime ambushes. In the latter cases, they usually took place at the end of the day, when the enemy lost his vigilance from fatigue. In addition, conducting an ambush in the afternoon provided the dushmans with the necessary conditions for the subsequent withdrawal from the battle and retreat after dark, which also limited the capabilities of enemy aircraft.

The ambush was most often carried out by a small group of 10–15 people. Her battle order consisted of observers and three or four subgroups. The observers created observation posts in the mountains or advanced to the probable routes of movement of enemy columns. In the latter case, they did not have weapons and pretended to be civilians (shepherds, peasants). There have been cases of children being used as observers. The basis of

the ambush was the fire subgroup, which included the main forces and fire weapons of the dushmans. It, as a rule, was located in the center of the battle formation in the immediate vicinity of the enemy's area of destruction and was carefully camouflaged. The rebels were usually placed along the road at a distance of 150 to 300 m from the canvas. On the flanks were grenade launchers, machine gunners, snipers. At dominant heights, DShKs were installed, adapted to fire at ground and air targets.



In addition to the fire, warning and reserve subgroups were created. The warning subgroup was intended to prevent the retreat from the ambush zone or its maneuver to another direction. The reserve subgroup was used, by decision of the commander, to reinforce the fire subgroup or to cover the withdrawal of dushmans from the ambush area after completing a combat mission. There were frequent cases of creating a distracting subgroup, which operated away from the ambush site and chained enemy reserves to itself. Communication with observers and control of subgroups was usually carried out by the group commander with the help of specially worked out light, sound signals or by radio. At the same time, small-sized radio stations of American, Japanese or Western European production were widely used.

When conducting ambushes, the rebels usually sought to break the column. To this end, they freely passed the outposts or most of the column and attacked the remaining vehicles and the closure. Lagging vehicles or small columns marching without adequate protection and air cover were especially often attacked. If a distraction group was used, then it was the first to open sudden fire on the column and fetter the guard units in battle. At that time

the column that advanced without guards fell under the fire of the main ambush forces and suffered heavy losses.

At the entrance of the convoy into the affected area, snipers were the first to open fire on the drivers and senior lead and radio vehicles in order to create a traffic jam on the road, disrupt control and cause panic. Others at that time began shelling vehicles with personnel and armored targets, using RPGs, recoilless rifles, heavy machine guns. When providing an organized rebuff to the rebels, they quickly removed their ambushes

and hid without offering much resistance. With good reconnaissance and protection of columns by escort forces, as well as with reliable air cover, the rebels usually did not risk ambushing and attacking

columns.

The raids were carried out on guard posts, small garrisons of enemy troops, warehouses, bases and institutions of state power. For their implementation, a group of 30-35 people was most often appointed. Its battle order consisted of a forward watch and four subgroups: suppression, main, engineering and cover.

When advancing to the object of the raid, the advanced patrol (2-3 people) usually followed in front of the main forces on horseback or on foot, disguised as local residents. He was the first to go to the intended object and organized observation of it. After making sure that the enemy did not expect an attack, the advanced patrol gave a signal (command) for the promotion of the remaining subgroups. The suppression subgroup removed the sentries and provided the actions of the engineering and main subgroups. The engineering subgroup neutralized mines and provided approaches to the object, the capture or destruction of which was carried out by the main subgroup. The covering subgroup blocked the enemy's withdrawal routes, prevented the influx of his reserves and ensured the exit from the battle and the withdrawal of the main group after the completion of the combat mission. When retreating, great importance was attached to misleading the enemy. To do this, the personnel were divided into small groups, which, along different routes, arrived at the designated assembly point.

During the war in Afghanistan, the intensity of the raids constantly increased. So, if in 1985 they were produced about 2400, then in

the following year almost 2900 were registered, and in 1987 - 4200 raids.

With the beginning of the supply of Chinese-made rockets, the rebels began to use shelling extensively. For their implementation, small groups of 3 to 15 people were assigned, who were able to transport and launch 10-15 rockets. For shelling, firing positions were selected in advance, which were usually located near the villages located in alignment with the artillery of the guard posts of the Soviet troops. This created the danger of hitting the local population with return fire from Soviet artillery. Rockets were mounted on makeshift tripods and aimed at the target. At the signal of the observers, a launch was made, after which the group hid. Sometimes a clock mechanism was used to launch a large batch of rockets, which closed the electrical network at a programmed time. The effectiveness of shelling, as a rule, was low. They pursued other goals - to cause panic among the civilian population and keep the

garrisons of Soviet and government troops on their toes. For this, as experience shows, in the areas bordering Pakistan, from 20 to 800 rocket launches per day were often carried out. In total, over the period from April 1985 to January 1987, more than 23,500 shelling of military and national economic facilities was carried out.



One of the main methods of partisan actions of the armed forces of the opposition was "mine warfare". It was intensively carried out on all highways and pursued the goal of interrupting or seriously impeding the movement of military convoys and state transport with national economic goods. The main attention was paid to the mining of the main roads: Kabul - Herat - Kandahar; Kabul - Hairatan; Kabul - Jalalabad; Kabul - Gardez - Khost. For this, various mines and engineering ammunition, mainly of foreign models, were used. Mines and land mines were placed on the routes of movement in advance

or immediately when troops and vehicles approached. The most characteristic places for the installation of mines and land mines were: sections of roads (routes) in front of settlements; sections of mountain roads passing along cornices, along rivers, in gorges, i.e., bypassing or restoring which is impossible or difficult; exits from main roads or entrances to them; approaches to water sources, fords, crossings; damaged sections of roads; gorge exits to roads; places convenient for rest, halts.

Mines were laid both evenly along the entire route, and in separate groups of 3-5 pieces. The order of installation of mines was very different: one track, in a chess

in order along both tracks, along the entire road, in groups (one anti-tank mine and 3-5 anti-personnel mines laid around). All mines were carefully disguised as the background of the area. Often, in order to harden the loosened soil, the installation site was watered with water or covered with ash from burnt straw. In order to create a uniform background of the area, animals were sometimes driven to the places of installation of mines and land mines. For laying mines in large detachments, there were specially trained mining groups

consisting of 4-5 people. Often civilians and even children after their little training were involved for these purposes. Posts were put up at mine-laying sites to warn drivers of individual private vehicles and pedestrians. Usually a certain fee was charged for the warning.



The leaders of the opposition devoted exceptionally great attention to sabotage groups and terrorist activities. It was carried out by forces of specially trained and detachments of various sizes. Usually the group was divided into parts, each of which performed its task. So, for example, the first attacked the guards, the second (technical) provided

the implementation of sabotage directly at the facility, the third was intended to disable the communication line and conduct combat with reinforcements.

Diversions were usually carried out 1-2 hours after dark. The most characteristic types of sabotage were the undermining of military equipment, power lines, the disruption of pipelines, radio stations, explosions in the buildings of people's authorities, in airport terminals, hotels, cinemas, etc.

Terrorist groups consisted of 3-5 people. Having received an order to destroy one or another statesman, they studied his way of life and activities, and then chose one of the ways to accomplish the task. At the same time, shelling of a car, shelling from a car, laying mines in office premises or houses, using poison, and placing explosive devices on vehicles were practiced. For three years - from 1985 to 1987 - more than 1300 terrorist acts were registered. Moreover, if in 1985 there were about 450 of them, then in 1987 - 800.

Such a high combat activity of the personnel of the armed forces of the government opposition was explained by the material interest of the spooks in the results of their "labor". For each captured or killed Soviet soldier, they were paid a one-time monetary reward of 250,000 afghani, and twice as much for an officer. Each destroyed tank (BMP) was estimated at 500 thousand afghani, and for a downed plane or helicopter, dushmans received 1 million afghani. A special type of combat activity of the forces of the government opposition was

the actions associated with the escort of caravans, which were the only way to transfer consignments of weapons and ammunition to the territory of Afghanistan from neighboring states. Caravans with weapons and ammunition were a combination of vehicles, security and escort forces. Weapons and ammunition, usually in packaged form, were transported in the back of trucks, trailers, cars, horse-drawn or pack vehicles. Caravans could be large (10–15 trucks, 50–100 pack animals) or small (2–3 vehicles, 3–5 animals). For actions in caravans, Afghan rebels usually used Simurg, Toyota cars, less often GAZ-53 and motorcycles. Sometimes

weapons were transported by buses and tractors with a trailer. When moving through the territory of Afghanistan, if the caravan followed the highway, in order to disguise the weapon, it was hidden at the bottom of the body under goods, bags of flour or grain, firewood, etc.



When crossing the border, the rebels used more than 50 routes, which in Afghanistan branched into a large number of roads and paths suitable for the movement of mechanical, horse-drawn vehicles or pedestrians. In total, there were 99 caravan routes, of which 69 were automobile and 30 pack.

Experience testifies to the variety of forms and methods of tactics and actions of the rebels in delivering weapons and ammunition to the territory of Afghanistan. As a rule, the caravan was escorted by representatives of the Islamic committee of the formation to which the delivered weapons and ammunition were intended. Taking into account the increased danger of escorting a caravan with weapons, the rebels chose the most convenient route for them, which allowed them to avoid a collision with troops and, if necessary, hide from the impact of aviation. Before the caravan left the formation area, a thorough reconnaissance of the situation along the entire route was carried out;

conductors. Reconnaissance groups and foragers were sent to sections of the route. As a rule, they were provided with means of communication, an agreed list of conditional signals, the necessary documents for legalization on the territory of Afghanistan and letters of recommendation for the leaders of the detachments along the area of influence of which the route passes, in addition, the latter, in turn, received instructions from the counter-revolutionary underground in advance on ensuring the safety of the caravan route in their areas of responsibility. The duties of the reconnaissance groups also included the tasks of spreading disinformation about the timing and route of the caravan. Usually caravans followed in three echelons. Ahead was the vanguard (a battle group of 10-15 rebels in cars, motorcycles, horseback or on foot), followed by the main body of the caravan and the

rearguard (5-10 armed rebels). The main composition of the caravan could be divided into several groups, distant from each other at a certain distance and having their own guards. When confronted with Soviet or government troops, the battle group of the avant-garde started a fight, ensuring the withdrawal of the main forces of the caravan. In the event that the main part of the caravan was blocked, the rebels tried to take vehicles with weapons out of the fire and only in extreme cases blew them up along

with the cargo. The main task of the escort and security forces was to ensure the unhindered delivery of cargo to its destination. In this they were assisted by detachments through whose territory of influence the route passed. However, the caravans did not always reach their final destination. In a number of cases, the cargo was seized by detachments of another party affiliation. In this case, relations between them became even more aggravated and eventually escalated into armed clashes that continued

a few months.

In a number of cases, the transfer of large batches of weapons was carried out on captured Soviet-made vehicles and armored personnel carriers with guards dressed in the uniform of the Afghan army, with the appropriate documents. The carelessness of road control posts allowed

the rebels to freely deliver weapons and ammunition to the assigned areas. In an emergency, caravans were unloaded, weapons and ammunition were hidden in caches, karezes and caves, and distributed to residents for storage. Vehicles were sent back or destroyed on the spot, animals were abandoned or sold to the public. The rebels themselves dispersed in the villages or went to safe areas. When the danger passed, the caravan could partially or completely form again and continue moving to the designated area. Thus, the limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was opposed

by the rather developed tactics of military operations of the armed forces of the government opposition. It was characterized by a combination of offensive and defensive battles with large-scale guerrilla operations. Moreover, the latter, as the most effective, was clearly given priority over other types of combat.

Limited contingent of Soviet troops

The combat operations of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan were a serious test of the rationality of the existing organization of formations, units and subunits, the combat qualities of weapons and military equipment, the level of training of troops and command personnel. Practice has shown that not all of them met the requirements of conducting a counter-guerrilla war in difficult physical and geographical conditions. Organizationally, the

Soviet troops were represented by formations and separate units. In view of the fact that the war was basically a war of tactics, the main burden of the fighting fell on the shoulders of the subunits, especially motorized rifle battalions and companies.

The motorized rifle battalion organizationally consisted of three motorized rifle companies, a mortar battery, five platoons (anti-tank, grenade launcher and anti-aircraft missile, communications, support) and a battalion medical center. In a motorized rifle

company, on average, there were from 80 to 100 personnel. Organizationally, it consisted of a directorate and three motorized rifle platoons. A motorized rifle platoon consisted of three motorized rifle squads and a platoon command and control unit. The platoon had three infantry fighting vehicles and an armored personnel carrier.

The combat practice of the first years of the war in Afghanistan showed that the firepower of the battalion was not enough to conduct independent operations. Therefore, when performing combat missions, it was significantly enhanced by firepower. The strength and means of reinforcement could include up to a company of tanks, one or two artillery batteries, a platoon of ZSU-2-4, an engineering platoon, and one or two squads of chemists. In addition, when performing particularly important tasks, the battalion could be supported by an artillery battalion, 2-3 units of bomber fighters, 2-3 units of combat and combat transport helicopters. During the fighting in Afghanistan,

motorized rifle units were equipped with either infantry fighting vehicles (BMP-1, BME-2), armored personnel carriers (BTR-60pb; BTR-70, BTR-80). These

the machines had powerful fire capabilities, high security, mobility, maneuverability and resistance to enemy weapons. Armored personnel carriers basically

met the conditions of the war. At the same time, significant shortcomings were revealed in their design. As a result, the BTR-60pb armored personnel carrier, which entered service with the Soviet troops in the late 1960s, was replaced by a new BTR-70 armored personnel carrier during the war. In appearance, armament and layout, it was similar to the previous one. Both vehicles were intended for transporting personnel to the battlefield and for their fire support after dismounting. They had four axles and all eight driving wheels, thanks to which they had high cross-country ability and the ability to overcome various obstacles on the move. At the same time, the introduction of a number of changes into the design of the BTR-70 made it possible to increase its combat characteristics. Thus, improving the quality, increasing the thickness, changing the angles of inclination of the armor plates increased the bullet resistance of the vehicle body by an average of 2-30%. The dimensions of the armored personnel carrier have become somewhat smaller than those of its predecessors. In the new model, side landing hatches were made on both sides between the second and third wheels, which ensured the speed and speed of dismounting and landing of military personnel by about 14-20%. The landing force in the car, unlike the BTR-60pb, was placed not across, but along the sides of the vehicle, facing outward, which made it possible to observe the battlefield and fire through hatches and hatches in the sides and roof of the hull. As a result of the installation of more powerful engines on the armored personnel carrier (two engines with a capacity of 115 hp), the average speed of its

movement increased by 15-20%. The system of fire-fighting equipment has undergone significant design changes - it has become automatic. The placement of fuel tanks in isolated compartments also contributed to reducing the possibility of a fire in the power plant compartment. Such design changes made it possible to more effectively use the BTR-70 armored personnel carriers on the battlefield. However, they still remained poorly adapted to operations in difficult mountainous desert terrain.

Subsequently, from 1985, the new BTR-80 armored personnel carrier began to enter service with the troops. Significant changes have been made to its design. The armored personnel carrier, which in its appearance almost did not differ from previous samples, became somewhat larger than its predecessors. Its length has increased by 115 mm, width by 100 mm and height by 115 mm. The increased dimensions made it possible to install one powerful diesel engine instead of two carburetor ones on the new machine, which was more suitable for the conditions of mountainous terrain with high air rarefaction at the passes. As a result, the car has become more mobile and maneuverable. The security of the new armored personnel carrier has been increased. An additional anti-cumulative protection was installed on it, which protected the upper part of the vehicle's body from being pierced by a cumulative grenade. The negative experience of blowing up cars on mines was taken into account. If the BTR-60pb, BTR-70 was blown up by a mine, then the defeat was inflicted not only on the vehicle itself, but also on the crew. Due to design changes, the new armored personnel carrier only lost the wheel gear and wheel during a mine explosion, while the driver and troops remained safe.

And yet, combat practice has shown that the new armored personnel carrier was not without a number of shortcomings, and first of all, it remained easily vulnerable to heavy machine gun fire and cumulative anti-tank ammunition. Therefore, the troops were constantly working on the creation of additional means of protecting personnel and the machine itself. For this purpose, lattice screens from sheets of automobile springs were installed on the sides, a screen made of rubberized tape was hung between the wheels, and a spare wheel was placed on the tower. In some cases, tanks with water (thermoses), oil or boxes (bags) with sand were used to protect the crew. However, home-made protective devices have not been widely adopted, mainly due to a sharp increase in the weight of the machine.

In general, armored personnel carriers, especially the last sample, performed their tasks with a fairly high efficiency in high altitude conditions, high dustiness and high air temperature. Infantry fighting vehicles in Afghanistan were

represented by two models: BMP-1 and BMP-2. First infantry fighting vehicle

modification, which has been equipping the Soviet troops since the mid-1960s, has proven itself well in the first period of the war in Afghanistan. Armed with a 73-mm smooth-bore gun, a 7.62-mm machine gun coaxial with it and an ATGM launcher, as well as having small arms of the troops being transported, it could successfully carry out various fire missions from a place or on the move. The armor of the BMP-1 as a whole provided bulletproof protection for the transported personnel.

At the same time, this combat vehicle was not without serious shortcomings. She had a large number of vulnerable places, which the enemy was well aware of. Combat practice revealed the shortcomings of the BMP gun: short firing range, low initial flight speed of the projectile, its high exposure to environmental influences (crosswind, air temperature, etc.), insufficient elevation angle of the gun negatively affected the effectiveness of the fire of a combat vehicle in mountainous conditions .

In order to eliminate certain shortcomings, the introduction of some design changes was practiced directly in the part: strengthening the bottom under the control compartment and the engine-transmission compartment; replacement of the rigid ligament of the driver's seat with the bottom; additional external armor on the sides of the hull and turret due to the installation of steel screens, etc. However, all these constructive additions could not fully solve the problem. Therefore, during the war, BMP-1s were gradually replaced by BMP-2s.



The new infantry fighting vehicle (BMP-2), which entered service in 1985, differed slightly from its predecessor in appearance. But the change in armament significantly increased its combat capabilities. In the BMP-2, instead of the 73-mm gun, a new 30-mm automatic gun with two-belt feed and a high elevation angle was installed, stabilized in two planes (which was completely absent in the previous sample). In addition, the launcher of the new design made it possible to launch ATGMs both from the inside of the vehicle and from the outside. By more rational placement of the crew in the car and design changes from the gun and the coaxial machine gun, not only the gunner-operator, but also the crew commander could fire. These changes made it possible to effectively use the combat vehicle both on the plain and in the conduct of hostilities in the mountains.

As part of the motorized rifle troops, units of anti-aircraft artillery installations ZSU-2-4 "Shilka" often operated. These installations, equipped with a quadruple 23-mm automatic anti-aircraft gun with high accuracy, rate of fire, sufficient power high reliability, were an of ammunition, large vertical guidance angles, effective means of combating ground

And

enemy in mountainous desert terrain at ranges up to 2500 m.

The personnel of the motorized rifle units participating in the hostilities in Afghanistan were armed with various models of individual and group small arms: 7.62-mm AKM and AKMS assault rifles; 5.46 mm AK-74, AKS-74, and AKS-74U assault rifles, 7.62 mm RPK light machine guns; 5.45 mm - RPK-74, and 7.62 mm PMK machine gun. The main weapon of the snipers was a 7.62 mm ATS rifle. In addition, motorized rifle units in some cases were equipped with large-caliber 12.7-mm machine guns NSV, DShK and 14.5-mm KPVT. As a personal weapon, officers, warrant officers, drivers and other categories of military personnel were armed with a 9-mm PM pistol.

The 7.62-mm Kalashnikov assault rifle, which was in service in the initial period of the war, proved to be a reliable automatic weapon in all respects. It was distinguished by high shooting accuracy, relatively low weight, unpretentiousness and ease of handling. At the same time, he was not without flaws, the main of which is the high recoil force of the weapon when firing in bursts, which led to a large spread of bullets. Therefore, in the mid-1980s, the 7.62-mm machine gun was replaced by the 5.45-mm AK-74 machine gun. Despite the fact that both models, created by the famous Soviet gunsmith M. Kalashnikov, were very similar to each other, the new machine was more reliable in operation and easier to handle. Its small-caliber bullet, having a high initial velocity and a large lateral load, provided better trajectory flatness, had good penetrating power and lethal force. Weak recoil when firing small-caliber cartridges had a good effect on accuracy and accuracy of fire, especially when conducting automatic fire, in addition, reducing the mass of the cartridge made it possible to increase the wearable ammunition load. This machine enjoyed great love among the Afghan soldiers. The enemy also highly appreciated his fighting qualities and tried to capture him as a trophy in battle.



The shortened AKS-74U assault rifle, intended mainly for arming paratroopers, had a folding butt and a short barrel. The latter significantly reduced its combat characteristics: the firing range was halved, and the spread of bullets increased significantly. Despite this, the machine remained a fairly effective type of small arms and was indispensable in close combat. A small part of the motorized riflemen were armed with the 7.62-mm

Dragunov sniper rifle (SDP), which has been in service with the ground forces since 1963. This rifle, equipped with an optical sight, made it possible to conduct aimed fire at a distance of up to 1300 m and posed a serious danger to those hiding in the mountains spook snipers. As a personal weapon of officers, ensigns and some categories of sergeants and soldiers, a 9-mm

Makarov pistol was used, which was used mainly for self-defense. Group small arms, which were in service with a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, were

represented by light, company and heavy machine guns, as well as various grenade launchers.

In the initial period of the war, the Soviet troops were armed with light machine guns: 7.62 mm RPK and 5.45 mm RPK-74. Subsequently, the 7.62 mm machine gun was completely replaced by a sample with a smaller caliber. The main reasons for this replacement were the same as the reasons for replacing AKM assault

rifles with AK-74s. The modernized 7.62-mm Kalashnikov machine gun (PKM), which was in service with the units of motorized rifle troops, was a powerful small arms that made it possible to hit single and group targets with high accuracy at a distance of up to 1500 m. However, its relatively large weight often did not allow for aimed hand fire on the move. Therefore, for shooting from a place, bipods attached to a machine gun or a special tripod machine designed by Stepanov were used. In some cases, to increase the firepower of

rifle units, they were given large-caliber machine guns KPVT, DShK and NSV, which were capable of hitting an open and light-type enemy located in shelters at ranges up to 2000 m. In more detail, the tactical and technical characteristics of the machine guns are presented in the table.

<i>MAIN DATA OF MACHINE GUNS</i>

Характеристики	РПК РПК-74	ПКМ	КПВТ	ДВК	НСВ
Калибр (мм)	7,62; 5,45	7,62	14,5	12,7	12,7
Вес со снаряженным магазином (кг)	5,6; 5,46	7,5	161,5	155	46,8
Емкость магазина (патронов)	40; 45	100	40	50	50
Начальная скорость полета пули (м/с)	765; 960	825	1000	850	845
Боевая скорострельность (БЫСТР. В МИН.)					
— одиночным огнем	40 до 50	—	—	—	—
— короткими очередями	150 до 160	до 250	до 80	до 80	до 100
Прицельная дальность (м)	1000; 1000	1500	2000	3500	2000
Дальность убойного действия пули	1500— 1350	3800	4500	5000	6000

A qualitatively new type of group weapon, for the first time in a combat situation used by Soviet troops in Afghanistan, was the 30-mm automatic grenade launcher AGS-17 "Flame".



It was intended to defeat manpower and open fire weapons of the enemy. The grenade launcher was fired with a 30-mm round, in which a cylindrical sleeve combined a grenade, a propellant powder charge and a primer. The mass of the powder charge was relatively small. It was intended only to ensure the flight of a grenade at a speed of 185 m per second at a distance of up to 1700 m. The radius of reliable destruction by grenade fragments reached 5 m. The AGS-17 had two firing modes - single and automatic. The combat rate of fire with a single fire reached 50, and with automatic fire - 100 rounds per minute. Automation "Flame" is simple, based on the use of free shutter recoil. The barrel in case of overheating could be quickly replaced with a spare. The relatively small weight of the grenade launcher (17.7 kg) made it quite mobile. A calculation of three people easily moved the AGS-17 following the chain of motorized riflemen, carried it through ditches and duvals, and lifted it into the mountains. In addition, in some cases, the grenade launcher was mounted on combat vehicles and equipped with an electric start mechanism. This made it possible to fire directly from the car, without exposing the calculation to the danger of being hit by enemy snipers. Possessing a high rate of fire, good accuracy of fire, quick preparation for opening fire, good

maneuverability, the AGS-17 was a reliable weapon in Afghanistan. During raids, combing and other offensive operations, the AGS-17 provided support to the first echelon units, moving either behind their battle formations or in the intervals (on the flank) of the units. In the course of the march, if the unit met enemy resistance, the crews quickly took up firing positions, covered the head marching outpost and the deployment of the main forces with fire. In defensive actions, grenade launchers with barrage or concentrated fire destroyed the advancing enemy in front of the front or on the flanks of subunits. In the conditions of the war in Afghanistan, the RPG-7 and RSG-7D (landing) anti-tank grenade launchers, as well as the modernized SPG-9M mounted grenade launcher, were widely used.

They were effectively used to destroy various light fortifications (duvals, stone fences, etc.) and to destroy enemy manpower with a high-explosive fragmentation grenade. Due to their light weight, hand grenade launchers were the most convenient in combat operations. They made it possible to effectively hit targets at ranges up to 330 m with a combat rate of fire of 4–6 rounds per minute. The SPG-9 easel anti-tank grenade launcher had a direct shot range of 800 m and a combat rate of fire per minute - 6 shots. More fully tactical and technical characteristics of grenade launchers are set out in the table.

MAIN PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS OF Grenade Launchers

Характеристика	РПГ-7	СПГ-9	АГС-17
Вес (кг)	6,3	47,5	31
Калибр (мм)	40	73	30
Прицельная дальность (м)	500	1300	1700 максимальный режим
Боевая скорострельность (выстрелов в мин)	5—6	??—6	350—400 минимальный режим
Дальность прямого выстрела (м)	330	800	50—100
Начальная скорость (м/с)	140	435	185

An effective means of fire impact on the enemy in the conditions of the war in Afghanistan were hand grenades: offensive RGD-5, RG-42, RN; defensive F-1 and RGS, as well as cumulative RKG-3. Initially, the troops were equipped only with RGD-5, RG-42 and F-1 hand grenades, which were put into service in the late 40s and early 50s. Being an effective means of hitting the enemy with fragments, they all had one significant drawback, which consisted in a large time gap between the throw of a grenade and its detonation (3.2–4.2 s). In the conditions of the mountains, this allowed the enemy, who noticed the thrown grenade in time,

to hide from its fragments behind the nearest ledge or boulder, and also created a threat of self-destruction of the thrower in the event of a grenade rolling down the slope after the throw. Therefore, it was necessary to replace the existing samples - with new RGN and RGO grenades, equipped with a fuse target sensor and triggered when they hit any obstacle. To destroy especially strong structures and undermine enemy equipment, Soviet troops also used RGK-3 hand cumulative grenades. More detailed tactical and technical characteristics of hand grenades are given in the table.

CHARACTERISTICS OF HAND GRENADE

Характеристика	РГ-42	РГД-5	Ф-1	Р1Н, РГО, РКГ-3
Вес	420	310	600	1070
				кумулятивная
Радиус разлета убойных осколков (м)	25	25	200	25 до 200
Время горения запала (с)	3,2— 4,2	3,2— 4,2	3,2— 4,2 2	ударного типа
Средняя дальность броска (м)	3—40	40—50	35—45	40—50, 40—50, 15—20

For the first time in the history of the Soviet Armed Forces, armored vests of various designs were massively used in Afghanistan for the individual protection of personnel. At the beginning of the war, there were not enough bulletproof vests for the entire personnel. Therefore, they were issued only to those who directly participated in hostilities or were on combat duty. However, even the first battles showed that the presence of bulletproof vests reduces the irretrievable losses of personnel by about 2-3 times. Special attention was paid to the provision of troops with personal protective equipment, and by the end of 1988, all personnel of the 40th Army were provided with them.

During the period under review, the troops received five types of body armor. The first sample received in 1980 was the Zh-R1 body armor, which weighed about 4 kg. He was comfortable in

application, but did not provide reliable bulletproof protection. This shortcoming required replacement in 1983-1984. of this body armor with new models 6BZ and YaB4. They were more resistant to a direct hit by bullets, but due to their large weight (about 10.5 kg) they turned out to be inconvenient for use in the mountains at high temperatures.

In 1985–1986 the troops began to receive new bulletproof vests Zh-85t and Zh-85k, which weighed 7.5 kg and provided bulletproof chest protection and anti-fragmentation back protection. However, the protective surface area was insufficient. Therefore, in 1988 they were replaced by the Zh-86 body armor, which had a single fabric part and a 1.6 times larger area of anti-fragmentation protection. Titanium alloys, ceramics and special steel were used as protective materials.

In general, weapons, military equipment and protective equipment ensured the effective combat activity of a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. The fighting in

Afghanistan required a special approach to the training of personnel, units and units of the 40th Army. This was due to the counter-partisan nature of the enemy's actions, which was unusual for Soviet theory and practice, the difficult physical and geographical conditions of the host country, the frequent change of personnel, and the need to make up for irretrievable human losses.

At the time of the entry of Soviet troops into Afghanistan, they not only did not possess the practical skills of counter-guerrilla warfare, but also did not have a single well-developed theoretical manual (instruction) that determines the procedure for acting in these conditions. Sufficiently rich world experience in counter-partisan struggle (fascist German troops during World War II, American troops in Vietnam, etc.) has not been studied in our country and therefore could not form the basis for the development of guidelines for the training of troops, the need for which arose already in the first months of the 40th Army's stay in Afghanistan.

An equally significant shortcoming in the training of a limited contingent of Soviet troops was their poor adaptability to combat operations in mountainous desert areas.

The emphasis on training, which was usually carried out in the troops of the Turkestan military district, and on the predominant recruitment of formations and units with personnel from the Central Asian republics did not justify itself. The tactics of military operations in the mountains, deserts, "green zones" had to be dealt with from the very beginning and in the most serious way, rebuilding on this basis all the previously existing troop training.

The need to conduct a counter-guerrilla war in the difficult physical and geographical conditions of Afghanistan required the immediate development of new guidelines for the training of troops. The operational department of the army and the operational departments of the divisions developed collections of documents summarizing combat experience, which was introduced into the troops in every possible way. Instructions for the operation of weapons and military equipment in mountainous desert areas were issued. Various handbooks were published on the tactics of the rebels, methods of camouflage, reconnaissance, detection and neutralization of various mine-explosive barriers, etc. All this made it possible to quickly introduce the latest methods and methods of armed struggle into the combat practice of the troops in the conditions of Afghanistan.

In the matter of training, serious difficulties arose due to the high "turnover" of personnel. It was due to the limitation of the period of stay of personnel in Afghanistan, as well as the rather high human losses that the 40th Army suffered annually. The time spent by privates and sergeants in Afghanistan was limited by the period of their active service and the need for preliminary training in training units located on the territory of the USSR. The maximum period was 18–21 months. The officers and ensigns, as a rule, were in Afghanistan for 24 months. This time was not enough for either one or the other to fully become masters of their craft. Certain difficulties in the training of troops were created by the ever-existing need to make up for human

losses that inevitably arose in the course of combat operations. The leadership of the USSR and the Armed Forces, when deciding to send troops to this country, considered, among other things, the issue of possible human losses. However, in practice, the losses turned out to be much higher than the calculated ones. It has been established that for ten years only irrevocable

human losses in the 40th army amounted to more than 26 thousand people, including 3 thousand officers. As a result, the amount of annual replacement of irretrievable losses was very significant. Even according to the most preliminary estimates, it was: in 1979 - up to 150 people (including up to 15 officers), in 1980 - about 2800 people (including about 320 officers), 1981 - about 2400 people (including about 300 officers), in 1982 - about 3650 people (including about 400 officers), in 1983 - about 2800 people (including about 350 officers), in 1984 - 4400 people (including up to 500 officers), in 1985 - about 3500 people (including about 380 officers), in 1986 - about 2500 (including up to 300 officers), in 1987 - about 2300 people (including up to 280 officers), in 1988 - about 1400 people (including about 130 officers), in 1989 - up to 100 people (including up to 1-15 officers).

Such a high "fluidity" of personnel and irretrievable losses in the ranks of a limited contingent of Soviet troops required the annual primary training of 40-50 thousand people, and then improve it throughout the entire period of the military personnel's stay in Afghanistan. The primary individual training of officers was organized

on the territory of the USSR. To this end, on the basis of a directive of the General Staff in October 1984, a reserve officer battalion of about 200 people was created on the basis of the Turkestan military district. Its staffing was carried out by officers who graduated from military schools in 1983-1984, as well as by persons seconded from other military districts. By the end of the same year, the number of variable composition of the battalion was increased to 500 people. From September 1985, the recruitment of the battalion was carried out exclusively by graduates of military schools. It trained officers of primary positions of all specialties and branches of service. The training was based on the development of skills and abilities in organizing and conducting combat operations in the conditions of Afghanistan. This was achieved by a comprehensive study of enemy

tactics and the combat experience of a limited contingent of Soviet troops, as well as

training in actions with weapons, on military equipment in difficult conditions of mountainous desert

terrain. Sergeants and specialist soldiers (mechanics-drivers of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, drivers of armored personnel carriers, gunners, operators, etc.) before being sent to Afghanistan also underwent appropriate training in training units on the territory of the USSR. NCOs and specialists were trained in training units located mainly on the territory of the Turkestan military district. Some categories of specialists were trained in the training units of other military districts. The quality of the trained specialists was determined by the relevant directives of the Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Forces in such a way as to ensure the replacement of military personnel who were retiring and out of action, as well as the creation of a reserve of trained specialists who were kept in the 40th Army over the state. The number of servicemen who were trained in the linear units of the military districts (drivers, grenade launchers, machine gunners, snipers, and others) was determined in a similar way. Until the spring of 1987, the duration of this training was three months, and from the spring of 1987 and later - 5.5 months.

With the arrival of military personnel in Afghanistan, they were directly trained to perform functional duties in a combat situation, which continued throughout the entire stay of officers, ensigns, sergeants and soldiers in the 40th Army. It took place as part of the commander's planned combat and political training of troops.



Commander training covered all categories of officers and sergeants. It was built on the basis of the characteristics of military operations in difficult conditions of mountainous desert terrain and the experience of previous operations and battles. Its main efforts were focused on developing solid skills among commanders in organizing combat, in managing regular and attached forces and means, as well as on developing their initiative, creativity and ability to independently solve various combat missions. Commander training was carried out in the intervals between combat operations on days free from combat duty and various economic tasks. In 1981–1981 it was carried out on the basis of commander training programs developed for peacetime. However, the very first years of Soviet troops in Afghanistan showed that these programs did not correspond to the conditions of combat activity. It turned out that most of them were focused on training military specialists needed to conduct classic military operations with an equivalent enemy, and not with a specific enemy in a guerrilla war. The use of these programs in Afghanistan did not allow quickly abandoning the tactical stereotypes developed over the years.

thinking and adapt to completely new, unusual conditions of the combat situation. As combat

experience gained, significant changes began to occur in the planning and conduct of command personnel training in order to improve it. A lot of work was done by the operational department of the 40th Army and the operational departments of the formations. As a result, by the beginning of 1982, the troops received a new officer training program that took into account the shortcomings of the previous one and was more adapted to the conditions of combat activities of units and subunits in a complex, rapidly changing environment. The main attention was paid to the development of practical skills and abilities in the organization of hostilities; in the management of forces and means of subordinate, attached and supporting units and subunits in combat; mastering the techniques and methods of armed struggle in difficult conditions of mountainous desert terrain with a specific enemy: the introduction of positive combat experience; the development of initiative, military cunning, the ability to take reasonable risks; the formation of high morale and combat qualities of all personnel. This approach to training made it possible to more purposefully prepare officers and non-commissioned officers for the upcoming military operations. The specifics of the daily activities of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan made it necessary to develop

special approaches to the planning of command training. First of all, this referred to the periodicity of planning; the composition of study groups, the organization of the educational process, the choice of the most rational forms and methods of conducting classes. Command training of officers in formations and units was planned for the academic year, in battalions (divisions) -

for each period of training, and in companies (batteries) - for a month. There were certain features in the acquisition of training groups. It was allowed to conduct classes of mixed categories - commanders of battalions and companies, companies and platoons. Sometimes there was an association of officer and sergeant groups into one training team. This was usually used to limit the period of preparation for the upcoming hostilities. For command classes except

commanders of attached units, aviation and artillery gunners, as well as heads of combat control groups and representatives of aviation units and subunits were also involved in combined arms officers. This made it possible, already within the framework of the commander's exercises, to outline and work out a number of issues of interaction in relation to the conditions for fulfilling the upcoming combat mission. There were many features in the

very organization of the educational process. If in peacetime commander's exercises were held on specially allotted days on a monthly basis (except for the months of command training and company tactical exercises with live firing), then in the combat situation of Afghanistan, the training of officers, ensigns and sergeants was carried out within the framework of a seven-day, and after 1985, training. - a twelve-day program. During this period, command classes (two each with battalion, company, and platoon commanders) were planned to be held in tactics, reconnaissance, fire, technical, engineering training, and practical driving of combat vehicles. Then similar classes were held with ensigns and sergeants. In the future, the officers received practice in working on communications equipment during radio training and command and staff exercises. The training ended with tactical exercises, where the command staff consolidated their skills and received combat management practice.

In determining the forms and methods of commander's occupations, we proceeded from the actual terms of preparation for various types of combat operations. So, in preparation for a planned operation, commanders and staffs, as a rule, had 5-10 days, and 3-5 days for an unplanned one. When preparing for ambush operations and escorting columns, they were given only 2-3 days. Based on the extremely limited time, in the classroom the main emphasis was on working out the issues of combat control. At the same time, group exercises and tactical briefings were the predominant forms of training. Lectures, seminars, instructor-methodical classes were held much less often. The main teaching methods were: storytelling, explanation, demonstration and exercise (training). A special place was given to practical work. This approach to training commanders in a limited time allowed more

to effectively master the new and special that was necessary for the conduct of specific military operations. During

the period when hostilities were not carried out, commander training was carried out at team exercises and training camps. Classes were held monthly. On them, the main attention was paid to the generalization and implementation of current combat experience. The meetings were held once every six months. They more deeply studied the shortcomings of combat practice, determined and practiced methods for their elimination.

The topics of the classes, as a rule, focused on the nature of the upcoming hostilities. Commanders of all levels were engaged against the background of a single tactical situation. Preparation was carried out taking into account the task of the unit in the upcoming battle. Along with the combined arms officers, representatives of attached and supporting units and subunits were involved in the classes. This made it possible to better work out the issues of interaction and management.

An exceptionally important role in the training and education of command personnel of the 40th Army was assigned to the analysis of combat operations. They were carried out: in formations and units - monthly, and if necessary - immediately after the end of the battle; in a battalion - a company - after each battle within three days upon returning to the places of permanent deployment; in smaller units - immediately after the end of the battle. During the debriefing, the tactical situation was analyzed in detail and the actions of each commander and unit were evaluated in the performance of a combat mission.

No less serious was the training of the rank and file. Before arriving in Afghanistan, all soldiers underwent two months of training in the formations of the Turkestan and Central Asian military districts. It was aimed at adapting a person to the difficult climatic conditions of a mountainous desert area, as well as at improving the professional skills and moral and psychological hardening of the younger generation. Upon arrival in Afghanistan, all military personnel underwent additional training for one to two months in a unit, and only after that they were included in the combat life of their unit. Lieutenant Colonel B. Karagodin, who commanded a motorized rifle

regiment in Afghanistan, claims that "commanders of all degrees

always cherished the youth and did not let the unfired into battle. Upon arrival at the unit, the recruits were reduced to a special unit and underwent a course of training under the tutelage of specialists who had experience in fighting in the mountainous desert area. If it was not possible to organize training on a unit scale, then newcomers took it in units, where soldiers and sergeants who had combat experience were also attached to them. Such training ensured the systematic entry into the ranks of the young replenishment and reduced the loss of personnel on the battlefield. Thus, during the conduct of hostilities by a limited contingent of

Soviet troops in Afghanistan, there was a clear system for training commanders and troops, which was constantly improved. The main direction of this process should be considered as the maximum approximation of all training tasks being worked out to the real conditions of the combat situation. At the same time, the constant high "turnover" of personnel and the lack of manuals and methods developed in advance and tested by combat experience negatively affected the effectiveness of the training process.

In solving various operational and combat missions, the troops of the 40th Army closely cooperated with the armed forces of Afghanistan, which consisted of ground forces, air forces, air defense and border troops. In addition, they included territorial troops and civil defense formations, as well as special troops, army rear services and military educational institutions, as branches of the armed forces. The total number of armed forces at different times ranged from 120 to 150 thousand people.

Human.

The combat strength of the Afghan army was represented by four army corps, thirteen infantry divisions, twenty-two brigades (three armored, one motorized infantry, eleven border, one artillery, one air defense, two rear army, two special forces "Commandos" and one brigade "Guards"). In addition, there were about forty separate regiments, which were included in all types and types of troops, but most of them belonged to the territorial troops. These units were of various purposes and subordination (central, defense ministry, corps, etc.). In addition, the armed forces had

more than thirty separate battalions, divisions, squadrons and types of troops, special troops and the rear of the army, which are both in the central and corps subordination. A large

number of troops of different organization had a negative effect on the overall level of combat readiness of the armed forces. Therefore, in the 1980s, the army command constantly carried out measures to increase the combat capability of its units and subunits. In the mid-1980s, some of the individual battalions were transformed into regiments, all divisions were brought to a single structure. A number of military units of the army were released from security functions. This made it possible to attract more troops to conduct combat operations and improved the management of units and formations.



The Afghan army was equipped with weapons and military equipment, mainly of Soviet production. In total, to perform various operational and combat missions, it had about 800 tanks of various types, 130 infantry fighting vehicles, over 1220 armored personnel carriers and combat reconnaissance vehicles, more than 2600 field guns, rocket artillery and mortars, 300 aircraft and helicopters of various types and purposes, as well as 13 thousand cars. This material base was enough to carry out not only battles, but also army-scale operations.

At the same time, the Afghan command experienced a number of problems in the use of weapons and military equipment. Such problems primarily included the difficulty of their restoration by repair bodies. This was explained by a weak repair base and a lack of highly qualified specialists. Another problem was the poor training of junior specialists and the understaffing of tank and combat vehicle crews. All this led to improper operation of weapons and equipment, to their premature failure.

The training of officers for the Afghan army was carried out mainly in three military schools. One of them prepared combined arms commanders, the second - officers of the Air Force and Air Defense Forces, the third - technical specialists. In addition, higher officer courses functioned in Afghanistan, which were engaged in improving the training of officers, taking into account the receipt of new means of armed struggle and the development of military art. There was also a military lyceum in the country, where training was carried out according to the type of Soviet Suvorov military schools. Part of the officer corps was trained in Soviet military schools.

The level of training of military specialists in Afghan military educational institutions in the first years of the war did not meet the requirements of the times. Therefore, the military-political leadership of the country in the mid-1980s took a number of measures to eliminate this shortcoming. The terms of study were increased: at higher officer courses from three to six months, in military schools (except for combined arms) from 21 months to 3 years. For the first time, the certification of officers and generals of the teaching staff in military educational institutions was carried out. Training of reserve officers has been organized at four departments of civil universities in Kabul (at the university, polytechnic, medical and pedagogical institutes). It covered more than three thousand students.

Improving the level of professional training of the command staff of the Afghan army was carried out at the commander's classes, which were held regularly two days a month, at the commander's training camp, held once during the training period, as well as during the weekly training program for combat operations. The main efforts were focused on training commanders and staffs

organization of hostilities and leadership of troops in the course of their conduct.

Subsequently, such a training system basically met the needs of the Afghan army with qualified officers. At the same time, many omissions were made in the personnel work itself. There have been instances of appointments and conferment of military ranks depending on belonging to different wings of parties or on the basis of friendly and family relations. Strict control was not established over the placement of officers and specialists who graduated from higher military educational institutions directly on the ground. Some officers were unreasonably removed from leadership positions and positions and moved to less important areas of work. Others received responsible posts without experience in this military specialty.



Even worse was the condition of the privates and sergeants, who were recruited on the basis of the law adopted by the country's government on universal military duty for the entire male population. For the purpose of its implementation, 46

military commissariats, of which 12 were in Kabul, 5 in the districts and 29 in the provinces. In the

current situation, they were not able to fully fulfill the tasks assigned to them and were mainly engaged in conscription, military registration of those liable for military service and registration of deferrals. In general, up to 65% of the military contingent was called up by the military registration and enlistment

offices. In addition to military registration and enlistment offices, the troops themselves were directly involved in drafting issues, for which special departments existed in the directorates of formations and individual units. The sphere of their activity was separate rural areas and territories that were under the control of the opposition. For these purposes, joint special operations were planned and carried out. It is not surprising that with this approach, forced conscription was predominant, which provided more than 70% of the rank and file of the army. The rest were volunteers. After training, they were usually sent to the positions of junior commanders or military specialists. For the training of junior commanders or military specialists, there were training regiments and schools that trained signalmen, border guard sergeants, logistics specialists, mechanics for combat vehicle drivers, etc. Training of the rest of the young replenishment was organized in the training battalions of the division and training companies of brigades, as well as in training ground forces centers. The last 15 trained sergeants and military specialists. The duration of training for young soldiers was one month: sergeants and specialists were trained for 3-4 months.

Combat training in the Afghan army was planned for the academic year, taking into account the combat experience gained by the troops. Units and formations taking part in hostilities were trained according to two programs, depending on the conditions of their kind of activity. The units directly involved in the hostilities were trained according to the seven-day program. Others, withdrawn from the fighting for resupply and replenishment of combat supplies, were prepared according to a twenty-day program. In training, the

main attention was paid to combat coordination and interaction with reinforcements. The experience of operations as part of tactical airborne assault forces, bypassing and

raid detachments, in overcoming large areas of mined areas of terrain, in defeating detachments and groups of rebels who are putting up stubborn resistance in pre-prepared positions (strongholds) and trying to evade a direct collision with the enemy.

At the same time, there were many significant shortcomings in matters of combat training of the Afghan army. The developed and existing seven-day program for preparing subunits and units for combat operations was not always carried out. The training of officers of the regimental, battalion and company levels remained weak, especially in matters of commanding subunits in battle and in working on communications equipment. Units and subunits were insufficiently trained in maneuvering on the battlefield with the aim of bypassing enemy strongholds, setting up ambushes, and especially operations at night. For these reasons, Afghan commanders, as a rule, were not able to conduct large-scale military operations on their own and constantly turned to the Soviets for help.

command.

An equally significant drawback was the low staffing of formations and units by personnel. Even in combat units, it averaged 25-40% of the state. The main reason for this phenomenon was not only unsatisfactory conscription, but also mass desertion. The number of deserters averaged 1.5-2 thousand people per month. And in a number of connections and parts there was a tendency to increase. The reasons for this phenomenon were mainly the low level of political consciousness of the personnel and their complete misunderstanding of the goals and objectives of the armed struggle. Under these conditions, great importance was given to territorial troops. They began to be created after the adoption by the Presidium of the Revolutionary Council of

Afghanistan of the decree "On the adoption of the regulation on the territorial troops of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Afghanistan" in December 1984 in order to attract former members of military formations and the opposition, who had gone over to the side of the legitimate government, and individual tribes to the side of state power, who pursued an independent policy. They consisted of separate units and subdivisions and were organizationally part of the corps, divisions, regiments in whose area of responsibility they were created. These troops

were recruited from volunteers who had previously been in the armed opposition groups, as well as from members of the tribes temporarily called up for military service. Persons enlisted in the territorial troops were required to undergo training at the nearest regular military unit and serve at least three years.

Units and subunits of the territorial troops were deployed at the place of permanent residence of their personnel. At the same time, part of the servicemen (at least 30%) was in the barracks and carried out military service. The rest were at home, ready to arrive at the service at the first signal from the commander. Candidates proposed by tribal elders and former leaders of opposition detachments were appointed to the positions of commanders, and officers of the regular army were chiefs of staff and services.

Thus, the main burden in carrying out the tasks of the armed struggle fell on the shoulders of the limited contingent of Soviet troops stationed in Afghanistan, whose command at first relied entirely on the foundations of operational art and tactics adopted in the Soviet Army, but then was forced to change and refine them with taking into account the specific conditions of the host country.

Military operations of the Soviet command

To solve large-scale tasks of armed struggle, the command of the 40th Army prepared and carried out combined arms operations. According to the nationality of the troops involved, they were divided into independent and joint, and according to the number of forces and means - into army and private. Independent

operations were especially common in the second period of the war. They were carried out exclusively by the troops of the 40th Army according to the plans and under the leadership of its command. In total, during the stay of a limited contingent of Soviet troops in Afghanistan, about 220 independent operations were carried out.

Joint operations were widely practiced in the third and fourth periods of the war. They were carried out according to plans developed by the Soviet command, but with the participation of not only Soviet, but also Afghan government troops. In total, more than 400 such operations were carried out during the war in Afghanistan.

The composition of the forces and assets for each operation was determined on the basis of its scale, position, nature of the enemy's actions and the chosen method of defeating him, as well as terrain features. At the same time, it was taken into account that the partisan nature of the actions of the armed opposition formations in the mountains required the involvement of much more forces and means than to carry out the same task under normal conditions. This led to the participation in a number of operations of four to five or more combined arms formations and a number of units of various types of troops and special troops of the army. At the same time, small-scale private operations often took place during the war. For their implementation, by decision of the army command, a part of the forces of one or more combined arms formations, reinforced by units and subunits of the military branches and special troops of army subordination, was involved. In addition, aviation was widely used in operations of all sizes. Its quantity was determined depending on the areas of location.

enemy targets, the state of his air defense, time of year and day. By the nature of the tasks to

be solved, the operations were carried out in order to defeat large enemy groupings in areas controlled by him, to protect military and national economic facilities, to ensure the escort of transport convoys, and the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan. Operations to defeat large enemy groupings

in the areas controlled by him were offensive in terms of the type of troop actions, although defensive operations could also be carried out in some areas. In terms of organization and practical implementation, these operations were among the most complex. At the same time, the expenditure of forces and means was not always adequate to the results obtained. Nevertheless, the Soviet command, deprived of the opportunity to effectively influence the military-strategic situation in the country in other ways, was forced to carry out such operations. An example of such an operation is the Panjshir operation, which was carried out in the Panjshir River valley (Parvan province) and adjacent areas in May 1982. The increased interest in this area by both warring parties was quite understandable. The valley of the Panjshir River,

which stretches for almost 250 km surrounded by the Hindu Kush mountains, was one of the main arteries connecting the central provinces of the country with Pakistan. It was this area that was chosen as the center of the largest opposition party - the Islamic Society of Afghanistan, headed by Rabbani. In addition, there were large deposits of emeralds, rubies and lapis lazuli, the extraction of which provided the opposition with the necessary funds to purchase weapons and equipment abroad. Therefore, it is not surprising that the valley of the Panjshir River and the adjacent mountain ranges were chosen to host the "Central Partisan Base", which trained the armed detachments of the Mujahideen, supplied them with weapons, ammunition, food and other property, not only in the valley itself, but also in the adjacent her provinces.

By May 1982, the main enemy forces concentrated in the Panjshir River valley numbered more than 5 thousand. The defense of the Mujahideen

was built taking into account the mountainous nature of the area. It was based on separate strongholds located on dominant heights, in gorges and in other places convenient for defense. In a number of cases, strongholds were created in fortresses and on the outskirts of villages. Each strong point was defended by a garrison of 10-20 people and equipped with several firing points made of stone. The headquarters and centers of Islamic committees were located, as a rule, in the most protected places. Their protection was carried out by detachments of 3-50 people armed with small arms and portable anti-aircraft missile systems. Field artillery firing positions were set up on sites near crevices or caves and were carefully camouflaged. The guns and mortars themselves were constantly in shelters and rolled out onto the site only for firing. Such a defense made it possible for relatively small forces to exercise control over the entire area and to a large extent made it difficult for reconnaissance to open it and defeat it with artillery fire and air strikes.

The preparations for the Panjshir operation began with a thorough reconnaissance of the enemy in order to determine his forces and means, the locations of strongholds and other important military and economic facilities. As a result of the work done, before the start of the operation, 95 detachments and groups of Mujahideen with a total number of up to 3 thousand people, 16 Islamic committees, up to 100 units of air defense equipment, two reserve training centers, several warehouses were opened. Taking into account the fact that the intelligence received, as a rule, highlighted no more than half of the real situation, the Soviet command concluded that there were large enemy forces in the valley and decided to destroy them. On this basis, the composition and disposition of the main forces of the Mujahideen were determined and the grouping of troops necessary for their defeat in such a difficult area of the terrain was outlined.

To participate in the operation from a limited contingent of Soviet troops, units of two motorized rifle and airborne divisions, a separate motorized rifle brigade, units of two separate motorized rifle and airborne regiments, as well as units and subunits of military branches, front and army aviation were involved. From the armed forces of Afghanistan, units were involved in the operation

three infantry divisions, a unit of the Commandos brigade, a separate infantry regiment, as well as a unit of the Afghan state security agencies. In total, this grouping consisted of about 12 thousand people, which made it possible to have a 2.5-fold superiority over the enemy. The idea of the operation was to inflict two strikes: the main

one along the Panjshir river valley in the direction of Bagram-Evim, the second one - to the north along the Gorbant river valley. During these attacks, the Soviet and Afghan troops were supposed to use joint offensive actions of motorized rifle formations and units, combined with tactical airborne landings and air strikes, to destroy the enemy in the river valleys and establish control over the strategically important region of Afghanistan. The scope of the operation reached 60 km along the front and up to 220 km in depth, the duration was determined at 13-15 days. Consequently, the average rate of advance should have been 15-18 km per day. The operational formation of the troops included the first echelon, the combined arms reserve, groupings of

artillery, special troops and the rear. As an independent element, an air echelon was created, consisting of 20 battalions of Soviet and Afghan troops.

The planning of the operation was carried out taking into account the specifics associated with the participation in the hostilities of formations and units of the Afghan army, police and state security agencies. A strictly limited number of officers were involved in the development of operational documents, and only from the headquarters of the 40th

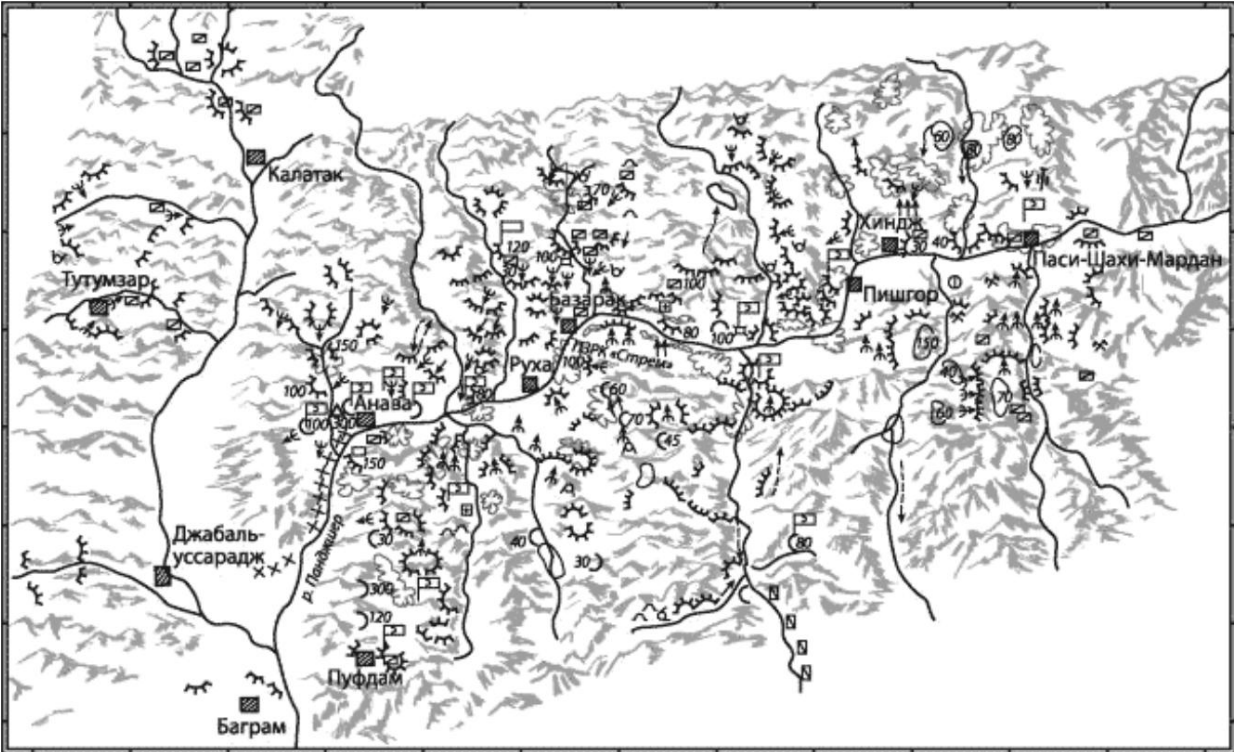
Army. Through their efforts, by the end of April, a general plan of operation and private plans for the use of military branches, special troops, various services for operational camouflage and disinformation of the enemy were developed and approved. The latter provided for military operations along the Gorbant River and aimed to mislead the Mujahideen about the direction of the main attack and the time of the start of the offensive. This plan was brought to the attention of the Afghan command and soon became known to the enemy.

Particularly carefully and with great secrecy, military operations were planned in the direction of the main attack. The operational department of the army developed maps with the initial situation, combat

orders, control signals, equipment instructions, aerial photographs of the areas of upcoming operations. All these documents were placed in envelopes, which were handed over to the commanders of formations and units at the army headquarters only 5 days before the start of the offensive.

In the period from 5 to 10 May, an aerial reconnaissance of the area of forthcoming operations was carried out with the main officials of formations and separate units. The tasks for the troops were clarified and the interaction of heterogeneous forces and means was organized according to tasks, lines, time and methods of

action. During the organization of interaction, the directions (routes) of the advancement of formations and units, the demarcation lines between them, the areas of landing of airborne assault forces, the places for the construction of barriers and destruction, the boundaries of the meeting of troops and the procedure for their joint actions when capturing important objects, as well as signals of control and mutual identification were determined. Coordinating the actions of artillery and aviation, the commanders paid special attention to the optimal distribution of targets between them and determined the time of strikes (opening fire). The actions of aviation and artillery were especially carefully coordinated when they struck at the same target. In this case, the time of the strike, the routes of flight of aircraft and the direction of artillery fire were determined. With the advent of the enemy's air defense systems, in addition, the procedure for the preliminary suppression of air defense systems by artillery forces on flight routes and in the area of aviation was coordinated



Grouping and building enemy defenses in the valley of the Panjshir River

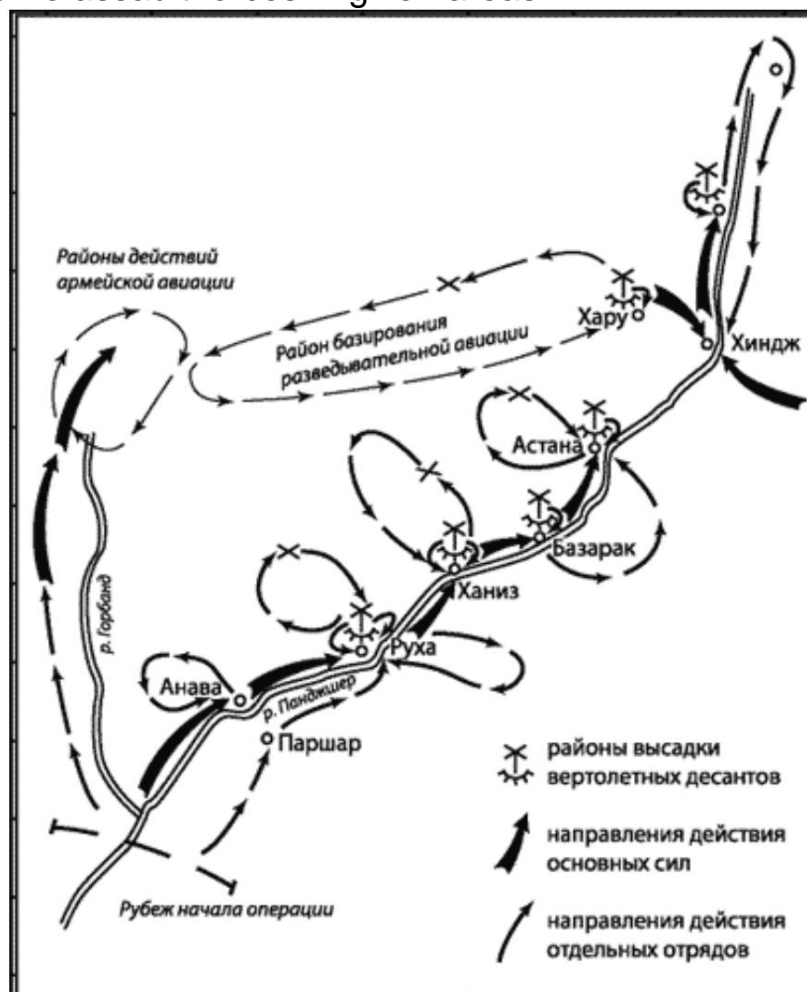
Of particular difficulty for commanders of all levels was the organization of interaction with units and subunits of the Afghan army. In order to conceal the plan of the operation, it was organized in a short time, as a rule, according to the map, most often after the assignment of tasks immediately before the start of the advance of troops into the combat area and even during their deployment in battle formation. Undoubtedly, the effectiveness of such interaction was most often extremely low.



Simultaneously with the preparation of commanders and staffs, the preparation of troops for the upcoming actions was carried out intensively. Comprehensive staff radio training was carried out at the link army - division - regiment - battalion. Tactical combat exercises and live firing exercises were held in the units. All training of the troops ended with readiness reviews at the points of permanent deployment. After that, they were given two or three days to eliminate the identified deficiencies and load material supplies onto the armored vehicles and vehicles of the battalions. In view of the fact that during

the operation it was planned to use a large number of tactical airborne assault forces, special attention was paid to their preparation. Depending on the height of the landing sites above sea level (1500–2000 m and more), they were all divided into four categories. Helicopters delivering paratroopers to the sites of the first category (height less than 1500 m) took eight people on board, the second (height 1500-1800 m) - seven people each, the third (height 1800-2000 m) - four or five, and the fourth (more than 2000 m) - a total of four people. All paratroopers, both Soviet and Afghan, were pre-assigned to helicopters, with the crews of which they worked out the issues of landing, disembarking and fire damage to the enemy, who happened to be near the landing sites. The command staff of the airborne units was thus distributed between flights so that the commander of the regiment (brigade), having flown out after the capture group on the first flight, would take control of the landing force, and one of his deputies would organize the dispatch of helicopters at the airfield and

departed on the last flight. These measures made it possible to exclude the accumulation of troops at the airfield and ensured an organized landing of tactical airborne assault forces in given areas.



The concept and course of hostilities in the Panjshir operation in May 1982

In parallel with the planning of the operation and conducting exercises with the troops, work continued to create stocks of ammunition, food, fuel and lubricants and other materiel. The Bagram airfield was turned into a supply base for troops. Hundreds of tons of various cargoes, mechanized loading facilities were delivered there in advance, warehouses were equipped.

For the general command and control of the troops during the operation, an operational group was created, headed by the chief of staff of the army. It included the heads of military branches, departments and services. In addition, in the interests of monitoring the redeployment of troops, providing

assistance to commanders of formations in managing units and coordinating their actions with neighbors in the initial period of hostilities, three more operational groups were additionally created from officers of the military branches and

services of the army. Before the start of the operation, such important work as the training of guides from among the local residents of the Panjshir Valley, one for each battalion, was

checked. The Panjshir operation began on May 15, 1982 and proceeded in four stages. The content of the first stage, which took place on May 15–16, was diverting actions in the province of Gorbond in order to misinform the enemy regarding the direction of the main attack. Disinformation has produced positive results. The command of the opposition troops, having taken a diversionary blow as the main one, hastily began to transfer additional forces to the valley of the Gorbond River from adjacent areas and even from the valley of the Panjshir River.

In the meantime, the main grouping of Soviet and Afghan troops was concentrated and deployed north of Bagram at the entrance to the Panjshir River valley. The command post of the operational group of the 40th Army was deployed there. Columns of military equipment of tactical airborne units were also pulled there with a stock of materiel loaded on them at the rate of 12-15 days of combat operations. The personnel of the landing units all this time remained at the points of permanent deployment.



On the night of May 16, eleven reconnaissance companies almost without a fight captured all the main dominant heights at the entrance to the Panjshir Valley, and artillery took up firing positions and prepared data for firing. The next night, one of the motorized rifle battalions entered the valley and, advancing up to 10 km, took possession of several dominant heights in its depths on the move. Thus, a kind of springboard was formed for the development of the operation in the main direction.

The second stage of the operation (May 17–22) began at 4 am on May 17. After delivering massive air strikes to the entire depth of the task being performed and carrying out artillery preparation on the identified enemy strongholds, the Soviet and Afghan units went on the offensive in the direction of the main attack. Motorized rifle subunits, under the cover of their armored groups, advanced on foot on both sides of the river, sequentially occupying one height after another, destroying the enemy they encountered. An hour after the start of the offensive, tactical airborne assault forces were landed from the front in the areas of the settlements of Rukh and Bazararak as part of the Soviet motorized rifle and Afghan

infantry battalions each. The task of these landings was to capture the dominant heights in the landing areas and prevent the enemy from retreating deep into the Panjshir Valley. The landing was preceded by a massive air treatment of the landing areas. During the landing, aviation also continued to deliver bombing strikes against enemy targets located at nearby heights. Such fire support made it possible to suppress the main firing points of the Mujahideen and to minimize the loss of landing forces during the landing. At the same time, the air defense system of dushmans was suppressed somewhat worse. As a result, two helicopters were destroyed and several more were damaged during the landing in the Rukh area. The shortcomings of the landing of the first wave were taken into

account by the Soviet command. Further landing was preceded by repeated air treatment of the landing sites by front-line aviation and Mi-24 helicopters. This ensured the successful landing of subsequent landings.

In total, during the first day of the operation, six battalions (three Soviet and three Afghan) with a total number of 1,200 people were landed successively to a depth of 40–50 km from the entrance to the valley and to a distance of up to 80 km from the Bagram airfield. The landing subunits, using the element of surprise, seized landing sites and dominant heights, destroyed the existing enemy strongholds and organized their all-round defense.

The successful actions of the paratroopers contributed to the advance of the ground forces on Anova simultaneously in three converging directions - along the only road along the channel of the Panjshir River and along the mountain gorges adjacent to the settlement from the north and from the south. The troops advanced in columns. Ahead of the columns of the main forces, the vanguards acted as part of motorized rifle battalions, reinforced with tanks and self-propelled guns. These subunits suppressed the enemy's firing points with fire from all available means and ensured the operations of the movement support detachments (OOD) that followed them.

As a rule, the division's OOD included a mine-clearing platoon, an engineer-sapper, an engineering-road company, as well as a tank and motorized rifle company. From these forces, groups of reconnaissance, demining, barriers, road and pavement,

mining and reserve. These bodies removed the mines of the enemy, cleared the blockages encountered on the way, and restored the destroyed sections of the road. The rate of advance of the OOD in mined areas with blockages and destruction was low and did not exceed 2 km per hour. This predetermined the low rate of advance of the vanguard and the column of the main forces, which on the first day averaged 1–2 km per hour.



The difficult terrain, the patchy nature of the defense of dushmans and the presence of a large number of engineering barriers predetermined the use of a new method of offensive troops. Its content was the simultaneous fire defeat of the enemy to the entire depth of the task being performed with the successive destruction of him in the valley by ground forces and coverage by air with tactical landing forces. This combination of actions prevented the enemy from maneuvering, dismembered his armed formations and ensured their destruction piecemeal. The offensive along the

Panjshir River valley from the front was combined with the actions of part of the forces, bypassing the dominant heights,

located on the flanks. The possession of the gorges was carried out, as a rule, on foot, after which the armored group of the unit was introduced there. Depending on the conditions of the terrain and the width of the gorge, the armored group moved along the bed of a shallow river or along the side of the road, ready to open fire on the opposite slope or ridge of height. When the enemy resisted in the gorge, he was hit by fire support helicopters, artillery fire and mortars. After that, bypassing the units along the ridges of the heights, a fire bag was created, in which the destruction of the Mujahideen was completed. At the same time, remote mining of paths extending from the valley to the north and south through the passes was practiced. This ensured the isolation of the combat area from the influx of fresh reserves from the neighboring regions adjacent to the Panjshir and excluded the withdrawal of the remnants of the defeated groups to other provinces.

In order to build up the efforts of the troops, from the morning of the second day of the operation, tactical airborne assault forces were landed in the Mata area (one battalion each from the Soviet and Afghan troops) to capture advantageous landing sites, commanding heights, preventing the enemy from retreating to the east and approaching his reserves from the Andarab valley. Motorized rifle and airborne assault units, with the support of front-line and army aviation, first of all captured the landing sites. Then they destroyed the enemy, occupied the dominant heights and thereby sharply limited the maneuverability of the enemy troops. On May 19, two battalions of Soviet and Afghan troops landed in the Astana area

and the same forces landed in the Mata area. A day later, four more battalions (two Soviet and two Afghan) were landed in the Evim area at a depth of 100 km from the entrance to the Panjshir Valley. Thus, within four days from the beginning of the offensive of the main forces, sixty-five battalions were transferred to the rear of the enemy with the help of helicopters.

Despite such a massive use of landing forces, successful operations by aviation and ground forces, the enemy continued stubborn resistance. He switched to positional defense, concentrating his main efforts on holding the dominant heights,

running parallel to the valley and located at the entrance to the adjacent gorges. A multi-tiered defense was created everywhere, in which all the crevices of rocks, caves, grottoes, and heights were used as firing positions. Cut-off positions were created between the heights, which were occupied by approaching and retreating groups and detachments during the battle. Such a defense to a large extent fettered the offensive of the ground troops and made it difficult for them to link up with airborne assault forces. Soviet and Afghan government troops suffered heavy losses in manpower and especially in military equipment ... Each day of hostilities began with fire training, which was planned based on the capabilities of the artillery and aircraft involved. The duration of fire training was determined depending on the number of fire raids and was, as a rule, 26-30 minutes. One or two targets were

planned for each howitzer battery. A feature of the fire defeat was that the fire was fired simultaneously at all planned targets (one fire platoon at one target, and the second at another target). In some cases, each rocket artillery combat vehicle received a separate target. The consumption of ammunition, depending on the nature and location of the target, ranged from 40-60 to 120 shells and mines per target. Artillery support for the attack was carried out mainly by the method of concentrated fire and fire on individual targets throughout the entire depth of the subunits' combat mission. At the same time, each battalion was supported by the fire of one or two artillery battalions. The effectiveness of artillery fire was achieved primarily due to the mode of fire and the duration of the fire impact. The consumption of ammunition during the period of artillery support for the attack was 200–600 rounds per gun and

mortar.



As the troops advanced and the established defensive system was destroyed, the nature of the enemy's actions gradually changed. From positional actions, he moved on to maneuvering, and then returned to positional ones again. Leaving small groups for cover, the spooks withdrew the main forces into the depths, where they created new defenses.



Practice has established that the frontal offensive of the Soviet and Afghan troops, as a rule, did not lead to success. The enemy, in the course of fire training or in the course of bombing and assault strikes by aircraft, managed to withdraw his subunits and fire weapons along the lines of communication behind the slopes, while maintaining their combat effectiveness. With the transition of the advancing troops to the attack, he returned forces and means to prepared positions and put up stubborn resistance. However, almost none of the commanders dared to change their tactics during the operation. The troops slowly drove the enemy out of the areas he occupied, without causing much damage to the rebels. Only by the end of May 21, Soviet and Afghan troops were able to reach the settlements of Mata and Pasi-Sheun-Mardan, uniting with the airborne assault forces operating there. As a result, the second stage of the operation was completed. The enemy left the main part of the territory controlled by him, having suffered certain losses in personnel and weapons. The average rate of advance of the advancing troops amounted to 8-10 km per day ...

A characteristic feature of the second stage of the operation was that the troops, making extensive use of tactical airborne assault forces, actively operating at night, achieved surprise and a quick defeat of the enemy with minimal losses on their part.

After the entire valley was completely cleared of the enemy, and the enemy air defense system ceased to exist, the Soviet command began the third stage of the operation, which lasted only three days (May 22-24). His goal was to capture the main road junction in the Evima region, through which caravans with weapons, ammunition and other military supplies for the dushmans continuously passed from Pakistan.

To solve this problem, a tactical air assault was landed consisting of two battalions of Soviet and Afghan troops (about 600 people in total) in the Evim area at a distance of up to 220 km from Bagram. Aviation

preparation of the indicated area began two weeks before the landing. In total, about 130 sorties were carried out. The strikes were delivered on the alleged locations of enemy firing points based on intelligence data. Before landing, direct air training was carried out at the landing sites, which were located near the runway of the field airfield. The first wave of landing troops captured the dominant heights within a radius of 3-4 km from the runway and

proceeded to clear it from stones. Further landing and unloading of cargo was carried out mainly on the runway.



After the landing of all forces, the paratroopers expanded the combat area and launched an offensive against a number of settlements. The enemy, in order to avoid encirclement and defeat, began to withdraw into the mountains. With the onset of darkness, some of his detachments, numbering several hundred people each, tried to storm the heights captured by the paratroopers, but all these attacks ended unsuccessfully. By the end of May 24, Soviet and Afghan units were firmly entrenched in the captured area and reliably cut off the most important communications of the enemy. A feature of

this landing was the flight, which was carried out at an altitude of 4600–4700 m, which bordered on the limiting capabilities of the Mi-3mg helicopter in terms of ceiling, speed and payload. Due to the high altitude of the pass and the significant distance of the landing area from the airfield, it was not possible to use Mi-24v helicopters to cover the landing. Therefore, this task was carried out by a group of MiG-21bis and Su-25 front-line aircraft. In connection with the landing of the theater in the specified area for a long

period of time, a significant amount of materiel was required from the base located in Bagram. For three days, 30 helicopters, making three flights a day under the cover of front-line aviation, transported 180 tons of ammunition and up to 30 tons of food and other equipment necessary to maintain high combat readiness of personnel to the area of the settlement of Evim. The high intensity of flights led to the fact that the load on the pilot per day was up to 7 sorties with a total flight time of 9 hours for army aviation crews and 4 hours for front-line aviation, which was significantly higher than the norm. The fourth stage of the operation, which lasted from May 25 to 28, was associated with the withdrawal of the main grouping of Soviet troops from the combat area. It was carried out consistently, according to a single plan. Part of the dominant heights was transferred to the Afghan troops. Under the cover of strongholds located on the heights and a strong movement support detachment, the withdrawal of troops began.

The rear guard, consisting of three Soviet and three Afghan battalions, was the last to emerge from the valley. By the end of May 28, the troops

concentrated in the area of the Bagram airfield, from where they were transported by transport planes and helicopters to their permanent deployment points. Armored groups under the cover of minor forces and aviation made a march on their own. Thus, the Panjshir operation, which lasted 14 days, ended successfully. During its conduct, the headquarters of ten zonal Islamic committees, the joint headquarters in the province of Astana, the main Islamic committee of the Panjshir valley, the committees of the provinces of Parvan and Kapista, depots of weapons, ammunition, food and other property were defeated. At the same time, a large number of secret documents were captured. Among them are a block diagram of the leadership of the enemy partisan movement, lists of members of the Islamic Society of Afghanistan party with photographs and questionnaires, lists of active members of the underground in Kabul, a program to fight against government and Soviet troops for the coming years, as well as lists of officials subject to physical destruction. .

Of particular interest in the use of forces and means is the operation carried out by the Soviet and Afghan troops in the Ghazni region from June 25 to July 3, 1982. It was somewhat smaller than the Panjshir one in terms of the number of forces and means involved and the scope of hostilities. A motorized rifle, air assault brigades and a motorized rifle regiment participated in the operation from the Soviet side, and a tank brigade from the Afghan government troops. The operation was carried out in a strip of 15–25 km to a depth of 70 km almost simultaneously in two regions.

In the Ghazni operation, motorized rifle units and subunits, skillfully using the terrain and the absence of continuous all-round enemy defense, pinned down the enemy with small forces from the front, and then destroyed them with sudden attacks on the flank and rear. At the same time, bypassing and raid detachments, which were insignificant in strength, were widely used, which boldly penetrated into the depths of the enemy's defenses and decisively contributed to the offensive.

main forces.

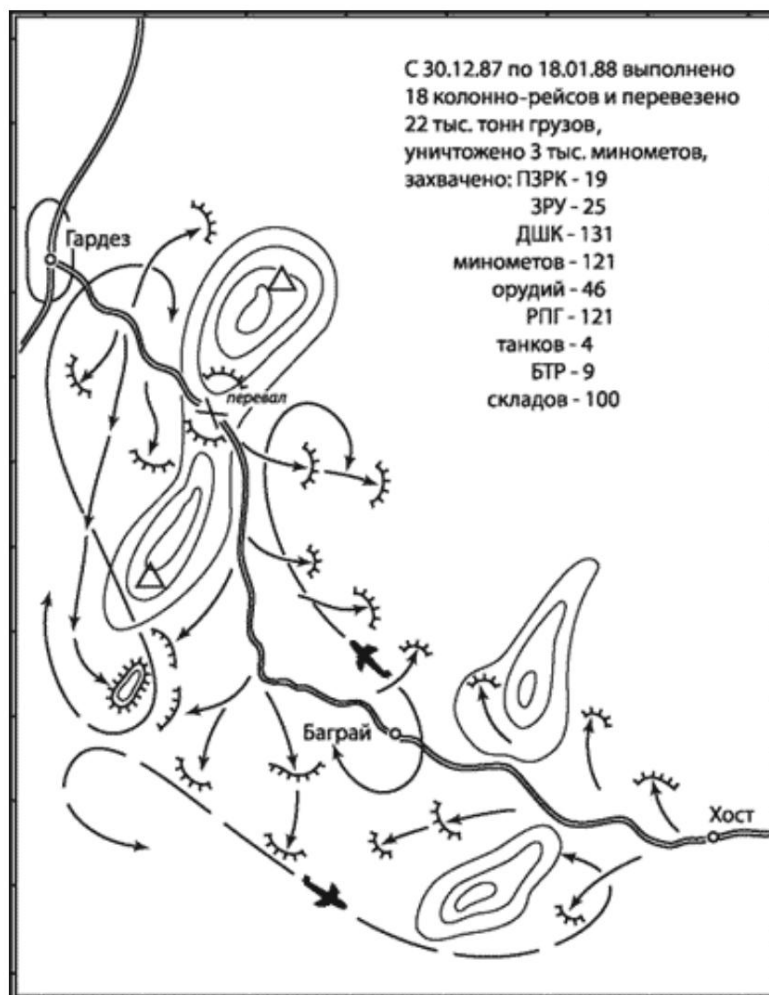
A feature of this operation was the effective night action of motorized rifle units, reinforced with flamethrower weapons. Under the cover of darkness, using the "dead spaces" and not revealing themselves, they came close to

positions of enemy fire weapons equipped in caves and niches, and then destroyed them with fire from flamethrowers.



The method of artillery support for the advancing troops, which was used in the operation, deserves attention. It consisted in creating a mobile fire curtain in front of the front of the advancing troops by conducting aimed direct fire from infantry fighting vehicles, tanks, armored personnel carriers, ZSU and ATGMs. He effectively suppressed the firing points of dushmans and reduced losses in the ranks of the advancing troops.

In the operation under consideration, the task of encircling and destroying a strong enemy grouping in the Ghazni region was solved in a rather peculiar way. The encirclement was carried out by armored groups, which, having secretly bypassed the settlement, occupied important lines on the enemy's flanks. At the same time, motorized rifle units on foot made a deep detour of enemy positions and closed the encirclement ring from the west, cutting off the retreat of the dushmans to the mountains. In addition, airborne assault forces were landed on separate dominant heights. The destruction of the encircled enemy grouping was mainly carried out by air strikes and artillery fire, and ended with the actions of motorized rifle troops.



The actions of the Soviet and Afghan troops in the operation "Magistral" (November 20, 1987 - January 21, 1988)

A new method of combating the Mujahideen in the Ghazni operation was private combat operations of special forces units and duty units. Their high efficiency was achieved by the fact that intelligence on the location of enemy targets was quickly realized by special forces units or duty units. At the same time, the object was fired, the approaches to it were remotely mined, and the military forces were transferred by helicopters to the designated area. Having completed the destruction of the enemy, they returned back on the same helicopters.

Thus, in the operation carried out in the Ghazni region, not only the experience of the Panjshir operation was used, but also some new methods and methods of troop operations were applied. In a number of cases they were unexpected for the enemy and led to success.

In general, operations to defeat large enemy groupings in direct armed confrontation with him were quite common in Afghanistan. They were carried out by large groupings of Soviet and government Afghan troops in wide bands and to great depths, as a rule, in stages. The result of these operations was to oust the enemy from the main base areas and inflict defeat on his individual detachments. The actions of formations and units in areas of responsibility were frequent. This method was used in cases

where the enemy grouping was located over a large area in relatively small detachments occupying settlements, gorges, mountains, which did not allow its encirclement. Then the entire area was divided into zones, in each of which a division or regiment operated independently. Aviation at that time, according to the plan of the commander, provided support to those troops that needed it most, and also blocked the entire area of operation. The most indicative in this regard were the operations carried out in January 1983 in the provinces of Kabul, Logar and Wardek against the enemy grouping, which united more than 20 detachments with a total number of about two thousand people. Several formations, units of an airborne division, a separate airborne assault brigade and a number of units of army subordination were involved in the operation. Due to the vastness of the area, it was divided into several zones in which operational and tactical groups operated. This method of action made it possible to simultaneously influence the entire enemy grouping in various areas, to hamper the maneuver of forces and means, and to smash the enemy in parts.



Organization of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan

Another effective way to defeat enemy troops was the actions of formations and units simultaneously from several directions with the involvement of front-line, army aviation and the landing of airborne assault forces. This method was used in cases where enemy groupings were located on disjointed axes and on

various depths. Therefore, they sought to defeat them simultaneously. In order to prevent the retreat of the dushmans, airborne assault forces landed in their rear, which captured the dominant heights and switched to their tough defense, acting as an "anvil". The entire area of the operation was controlled from the air by aviation, which, at the call of the commanders of the ground forces, delivered selective and massive strikes both within the area of the operation and on the approaches to it. Frontally advancing troops acted by combing, moving from one line to another. The duration of such an operation could be from 8 to 10 days.



A special type of operations were operations for posting columns. The largest operation of this type was the operation "Magistral", carried out from November 20, 1987 to January 21, 1988. For its implementation, the forces of a motorized rifle and airborne divisions, two airborne assault brigades and a separate motorized rifle regiment were involved from the Soviet side. Four infantry divisions, a separate tank brigade and Commando units acted from the Afghan government troops. In preparation for the operation, each formation and unit received independent lines of responsibility, within which they were obliged to conduct active combat operations in order to prevent

breakthrough of the enemy to motor transport columns. In addition, aviation, while at the airfields, was ready to strike at the call of combined arms commanders.

With the start of the operation a few days before the movement of the first columns, the troops occupied the lanes and areas assigned to them, equipped advantageous positions, created a fire system, and organized reconnaissance. In those areas where the enemy was discovered, he was destroyed or driven out by short surprise strikes by troops and aircraft. As a result of careful preparation and precise conduct, Operation Magistral was a success.

A special operation of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan was the operation to withdraw them from that country. In accordance with the Geneva Accords signed in April 1988, the withdrawal was carried out in two stages. Taking into account the transfer of part of the military equipment and weapons, the Afghan army had to withdraw 110 thousand personnel, 500 tanks, 4 thousand infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers, 2 thousand guns and mortars, about 16 thousand vehicles. The complexity of the conclusion was that by that time the armed opposition forces numbered more than 150 thousand people, who controlled over 80% of the country's territory.

At the first stage of the operation, from May 15 to August 15, 1988, the number of the limited contingent of Soviet troops was halved. Troops were withdrawn from two zones located south of Kabul and Shindak. This was followed by a three-month break, after which the second phase of the withdrawal began. It lasted from November 15, 1988 to February 15, 1989.



The withdrawal of troops at each stage was preceded by a lot of preparatory work. Taking into account the great length of the routes and difficult terrain conditions, all routes were divided into sections of daily crossings with a length of 120–150 km. At the end of each daily transition, formations and units were concentrated in pre-prepared areas, where equipment was refueled, its current repairs were carried out, food, medical care and rest were organized for personnel. All these areas were also preparing for defense, firing positions for tanks and infantry fighting vehicles were equipped, a fire system was created, minefields were installed. In addition, there were plans for the interaction of military columns with fixed outposts guarding the route, as well as with army aviation. At the same time, the actions of troops and aviation were planned according to the tasks of a defensive battle. readiness

artillery to carry out fire missions was determined three to four days before the movement of the columns.

During the operation, aviation activity was quite high. So, only during August 5, 1988, in the Kandahar region, she carried out 74 sorties and delivered 37 bombing and assault strikes. A lot of work was done by the engineering troops. Only on the section of the route from Kishim to Karashahr for the period from June 29 to July 9, 1988, they discovered and neutralized 193 anti-tank, 138 anti-personnel mines and 95 high-powered land mines. To solve this problem, at all levels, from a separate regiment to an army, movement support detachments were created, which moved ahead of the military columns, clearing the way for them. The speed of overcoming minefields was 200-300 meters per hour. All this also ensured the successful solution of the task.

Thus, in the operational art of the Soviet troops in Afghanistan, not only academic methods and methods of troop actions were used, but also a lot of new things. Not everything was positive and gave the expected results. Operations most often ended not in defeat, but in driving the enemy out of the areas he occupied, after which he soon gathered his forces again. This showed the inconsistency of the actions of large masses of regular troops against small irregular formations waging guerrilla warfare in mountainous conditions. But in cases where it was possible to organize the interaction of all branches of the armed forces and achieve surprise, the operations were more successful. On the whole, the war in Afghanistan posed more questions to Soviet operational art than it offered solutions. Unfortunately, they tried not to seriously think about this not only during, but also after the end of this war.

The specifics of the tasks solved by the Soviet troops, the peculiarities of the actions of the rebels, as well as the complex physical, led to the natural and geographical and conditions of Afghanistan climatic use of various methods, forms and methods of armed struggle. The most characteristic of them were flight operations, blocking and combing, ambushes, and convoys.

Raids on enemy territory

Raid actions, or, as the Soviet soldiers called them, raids, consisted in the advancement of units along a certain route or direction to the designated end point, which was located at a depth of several tens or even hundreds of kilometers. During the movement, opposition groups were searched for and destroyed. The solution to this problem was assigned to the raid detachments, which, as a rule, consisted of one or two Soviet battalions in infantry fighting vehicles or armored personnel carriers, a reconnaissance unit, sappers and artillery units. Necessarily, Afghan units acted together with the Soviet ones. The raid detachments were supported by combat and combat transport helicopters, as well as front-line aircraft. The duration of one raid was usually 3-7 days. The commanders of the raid detachments used general information about the situation on the route and about the enemy received from the Afghan troops. Sometimes guides from the employees of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of State Security of Afghanistan were assigned to them.

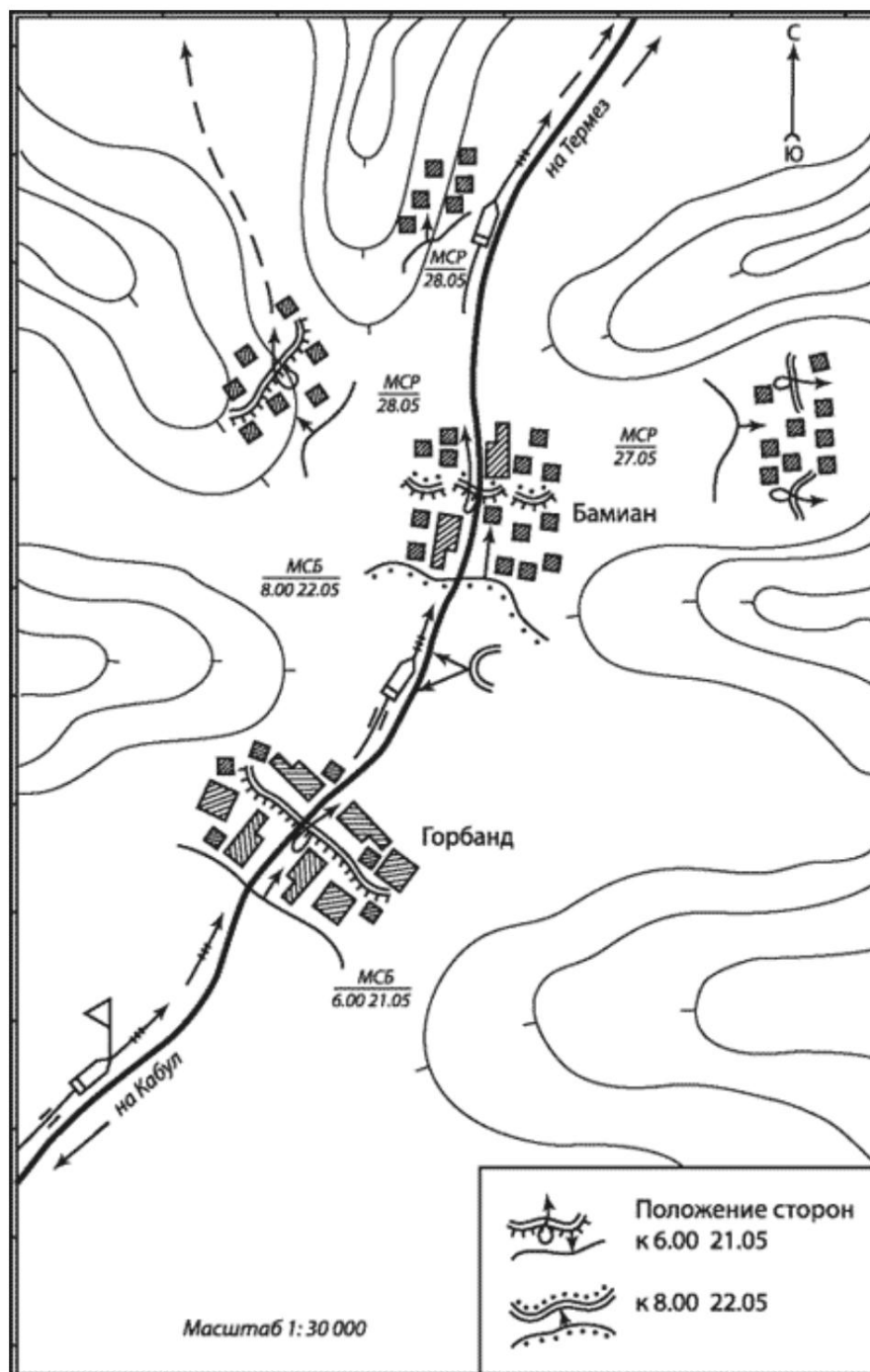
It should be noted that the reconnaissance system of the 40th Army in the first period of the war could provide the headquarters with information about the enemy only in areas directly adjacent to the deployment points. Therefore, commanders and staffs received basic data on the location and activities of the opposition forces, its plans for the direction of the upcoming raid through Soviet military advisers from the Afghan intelligence agencies. However, these data did not fully reflect the actual state of affairs. In them, the number of the enemy was usually deliberately overestimated. This was done in order to show that the Afghan units, for objective reasons, cannot cope with the enemy on their own, and therefore it is necessary to involve Soviet troops in order to defeat it. Unfortunately, there were even cases when intelligence data turned out to be simply false, and if they were implemented in the form of fire strikes without rechecking, they could lead to serious consequences for the civilian population. Therefore, rechecking and clarifying data on

the enemy were carried out without fail in the course of carrying out the task by the forces of the raid detachment, by interviewing local residents and interrogating prisoners.



Already in the early spring of 1980, the opposition increased the number of cases of attacks on outposts, points of permanent deployment of Soviet troops, columns of military equipment and vehicles carrying goods, administrative and economic centers of the country. In this situation, the Soviet troops, both independently and together with Afghan formations and units, began raid operations. A.P. told about how the first raids were carried out by Soviet units.

Pivovarenko, who served in Afghanistan as a reconnaissance platoon commander. Thus, in April-May 1980, the situation in the area of the section of the Termez-Kabul road deteriorated sharply. Most of this road was on the Salang pass. It was here that attacks by gangs on columns of military equipment and vehicles became more frequent. Therefore, it was decided to intensify the fight against the opposition by the forces of the Soviet troops.



Motorized rifle battalion raid along the Kabul-Termez road (May 1980)

A motorized rifle battalion, which had previously carried out the task of guarding one of the sections of this road, was allocated for raid operations in the direction of Charikar, Vamiyan, Punjab. He was given a tank and

a reconnaissance company, a self-propelled artillery battery, a platoon of anti-aircraft guns and a sapper squad.

The first raid of the battalion began on the night of May 20. At dawn, he approached the settlement of Gorband on military equipment. At that time, shots were fired from there, according to intelligence data, there was a large detachment of Afghan army soldiers in the village, who announced their defection to the side of the opposition. In response to the fire of the rebels, the raiding detachment increased its speed and, firing on the move, broke into Gorband. Six dushmans were destroyed, one infantry fighting vehicle and five vehicles were burned, two more fighting vehicles were captured as trophies. Despite all the swiftness of the actions of the flight detachment, the main part of the opposition left the blow in the direction of the city of Bamiyan, where the Soviet units rushed. However, on the outskirts of the city, they were ambushed, in which, fortunately, they lost only equipment - an infantry fighting vehicle and a ZSU-2-4. Only in the evening, with an attack from the front, the forces of the raid detachment captured the city, in which they had been staying for more than a month. During this time, two raids were made near the city, which ended unsuccessfully.

Only on June 28 did the raiding detachment continue to move in the direction of the Punjab. They combed the nearby area, looking for warehouses with weapons and ammunition, but neither warehouses nor bandit formations could be identified. Ten days later, the battalion was forced to return to Bamiyan. On July

10, returning to the location of the regiment, the battalion column was fired upon by the rebels from the opposite ridge. Four people were killed and died on the threshold to the hospital. Such was the price of this first raid.

In the afterword to this story, it should be noted that the losses of the raid detachment could be much greater if we remember that the settlements were captured on the move, without proper reconnaissance. The decisions of the battalion commander were characterized by straightforwardness, they did not show the desire for deceptive and maneuvering actions. This was a clear consequence of very significant miscalculations in the command training of officers at the beginning of the war in Afghanistan.



A participant in the events, S.V. Nikitin, who served in Afghanistan from December 1979 to October 1981, holder of the Order of the Red Star. During the survey, at the foot of Mount Lurkah, traces of vehicles leading to the mountain gorge were found. An attempt to penetrate deep into the gorge on infantry fighting vehicles failed. At the entrance to the gorge, one car was blown up by

mine.

Then the reconnaissance company tried to do the same on foot. After passing 200-300 m, one of the reconnaissance groups found a large warehouse of property and food to the left of the road. There was not a single person near him. Rota continued to move. The gorge turned sharply to the right. In this place, the scouts were fired from a large-caliber machine gun. Three people were wounded, who took cover behind a large boulder. Attempts to evacuate the wounded did not lead to anything, since all the approaches to the boulder were shot through with a machine gun. Only with the onset of darkness did the scouts penetrate to their comrades, but they all turned out to be dead. Having taken the dead, the reconnaissance company left the gorge and blocked the entrance to it.

The next morning, the main forces of a separate reconnaissance battalion and a motorized rifle battalion arrived in the combat area. An attempt was made to take possession of the gorge, advancing along the road. However, the units were only able to advance as far as the turn. They were stopped by machine gun fire, which was under a stone visor. It should be noted that this offensive was carried out without artillery support, no attempts were made to maneuver and provide fire cover for the attackers.

An SZ-25 attack aircraft was called in to suppress the machine gun. The machine gun was destroyed by precision bombing. The reconnaissance battalion, led by its commander, went on the offensive, successfully overcame the turn of the gorge and advanced another 500 meters deep, where it was again fired upon by dushmans from machine guns. The battalion commander was wounded and two scouts were killed. Enemy fire pinned the scouts to the ground.

An hour later, the commander of the army arrived in the area of operations. He analyzed the battle and clarified the task. It was decided to take possession of the gorge after a 10-minute artillery fire raid. On the slopes of the mountain, now in one place, then in another, sultans of gaps flared up. A booming echo floated through the gorge. But then there was silence. The battalion went on the attack again, but, met by enemy small arms fire, was able to advance only 75-100 m. Two more scouts were wounded. The firing points of the dushmans turned out to be unsuppressed due to the fact that the artillery fired not at specific reconnoitered targets, but over the area. This type of fire in mountainous terrain turned out to be ineffective. The reconnaissance battalion was unable to

capture the gorge and was transferred to another direction. The task of mastering the gorge was entrusted to the motorized rifle battalion, which completed it in two days thanks to the support of aircraft and helicopters. The enemy, leaving 8 people killed on the battlefield, disappeared into the mountains. According to an eyewitness, the personnel of the reconnaissance and motorized rifle battalions acted heroically during the fighting. There was a lack of combat experience, practice in fire control and unit control, and tactical training of personnel. Experience has shown that scouts and riflemen can successfully fight in the mountains only if they are actively supported by other powerful fire weapons, and above all

aviation, helicopters and artillery. At the same time, fire strikes achieved good results if they were delivered not on areas, but on specifically indicated targets.

Another instructive combat episode is recalled by Lieutenant Colonel A.L. Makkoveev, who served in Afghanistan from December 1979 to November 1981 as commander of a motorized rifle company, holder of the Order "For Service to the Motherland" III degree. According to him, during the winter of 1980 the situation in the area south of Kabul was calm. However, since spring, and especially at the beginning of summer, the rebels have stepped up their activities. The fight against them was complicated by the fact that the spooks acted boldly and decisively. Having carried out a fire attack on the Soviet troops, they did not get involved in a long fire fight, but quickly retreated and hid in the mountains. This situation became intolerable.

Since the reconnaissance could not determine the exact location of the enemy units, it was decided to conduct a search in the area of the village of Kirgak. For this purpose, a raid detachment was created as part of the 3rd mountain rifle battalion, reinforced by the 7th motorized rifle company in infantry fighting vehicles. At 5 o'clock on July 22, the raid

detachment began advancing to the area of the combat mission. Only 4–5 km were able to pass along the river on vehicles. After that, due to the increased number of obstacles, the battalion commander ordered the personnel to dismount. The equipment was concentrated in a convenient place and its protection was organized by the forces of one platoon.

Moving on foot along the ridge of the mountains, the units reached height No. 4. Here Makkoveev received from the battalion commander Captain Yu.P. Levintas had the task of combing the village, located to the right of the height, in order to check if there were any dushmans in it. Then the company in the marching column was to go to the main forces of the detachment. Having turned around in a chain, the company began to move towards the village.

Behind her battle formations, on the eastern outskirts of the village, a machine-gun-grenade launcher platoon was deployed in readiness to open fire. Within an hour and a half, the company combed the village with an inspection of houses and basements. Not revealing any traces of being in the enemy village, the personnel of the company began to concentrate at

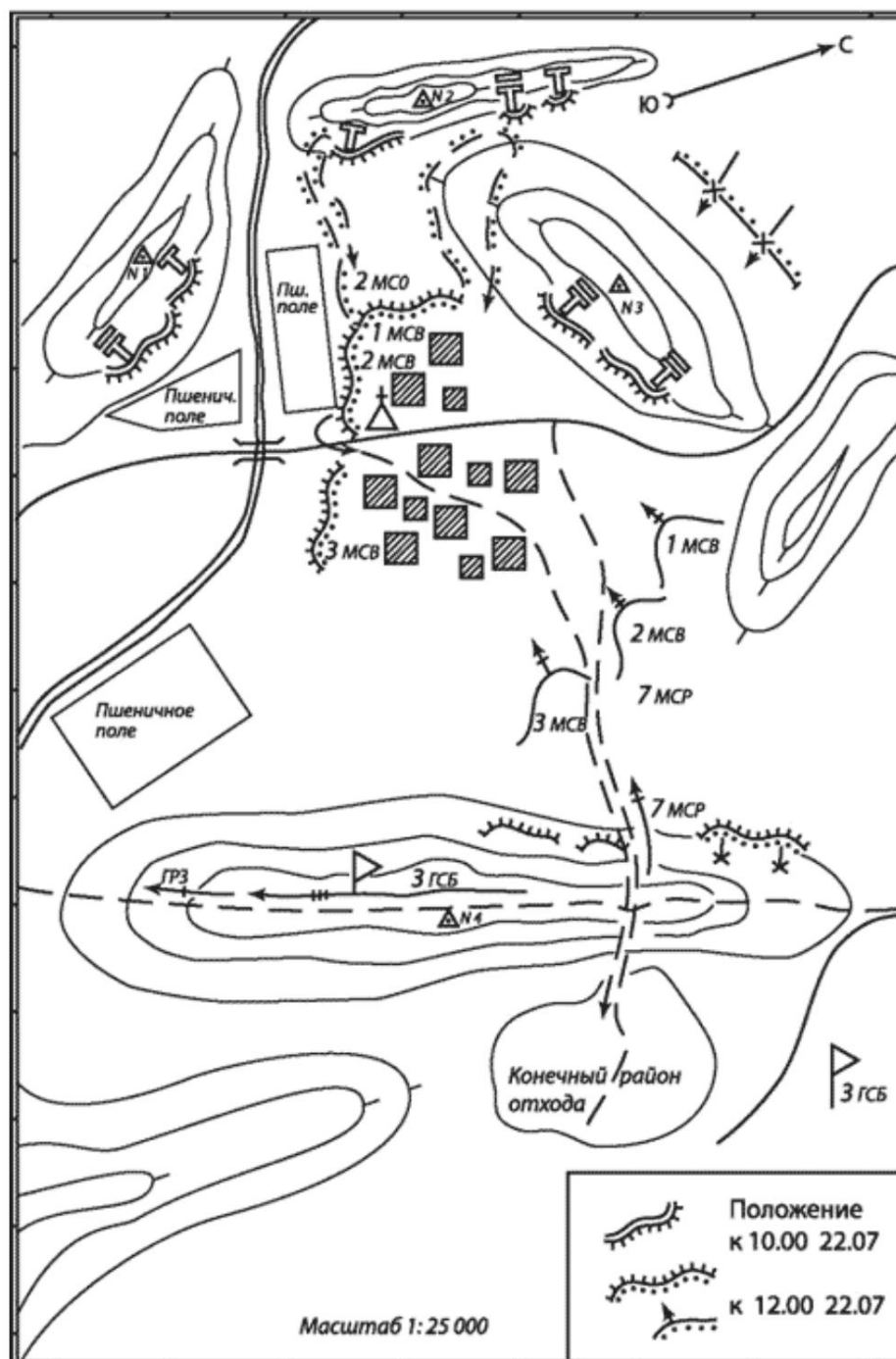
bridge on its southwestern edge. The commanders checked the presence of personnel. All were assembled.

At that moment, the dushmans opened heavy fire from height No. 2. The company lay down behind the duvals and took up defensive positions on the southwestern and western outskirts of the village. Its commander decided with two squads of the 1st motorized rifle platoon, under cover of fire from the front, to bypass Hill 2 on the left and right and destroy the enemy with an attack from the front and rear. At the same time, send a patrol squad to Hill 1 and capture it. But, when the units began to carry out their task, the rebels from both heights opened fire and forced them to lie down.

Thirty minutes later, an order was received from the battalion commander to withdraw the company to the area of \u200b\u200bheight No. 4. But as soon as the company began the maneuver, fire from dushmans from height No. 3 fell on it. dominant heights. Every action of the Soviet soldiers was in his field of vision. I had to call for help. After the defeat of the dushmans by the attacks of combat helicopters, the company was able to leave the battle at noon

and returned to the indicated area, having losses in killed and wounded. This was a consequence of the fact that during the course of the combat mission, enemy reconnaissance was poorly conducted and the heights dominating the terrain were not captured, which allowed the dushmans to attack suddenly and keep almost the entire combat area of the company under fire. There is no doubt that the results of the hostilities were affected by the company commander's lack of experience in fighting the enemy in the mountains. Thus, the first raids were characterized by the fact that they were prepared in a short time,

with the main attention being paid to the preparation of weapons, military equipment and equipment of the troops. The enemy was given insufficient importance to reconnaissance and the development of tactical along the methods. During the raid, the troops mainly advanced roads, which allowed the enemy to easily detect them and carry out appropriate countermeasures. All this generally reduced the effectiveness of raids, led to unreasonably large losses in personnel, weapons and military equipment.



Raid of the 7th motorized rifle company on July 22, 1980

Subsequently, the experience of unsuccessful raids was studied in detail and taken into account in the training of commanders and troops. Major S.V. Poleshchuk, who served in Afghanistan from December 1979 to November 1981 as commander of a motorized rifle platoon and a motorized rifle company, was awarded the medal "For Courage", recalls

raid in which he participated directly. The reason for its holding was that in September-November 1980, in the area east of the province of Herat, with the support of the wealthy part of the population of nearby villages, a large detachment of dushmans led by Shir-Aga intensified its activities. He kept the civilian population of the area in fear. Activists who spoke out in support of the government were killed. Cases of attacks on Afghan outposts on the eastern outskirts of the province have become more frequent. The command of the Afghan army, through military advisers, turned to the Soviet command with a request to conduct a joint Soviet-Afghan raid in order to search for and destroy this detachment.



In the second half of November, planning and comprehensive preparations for the raid began. The composition of the involved forces and means was determined - two motorized rifle battalions, a tank company, an artillery battalion and a battalion of the Afghan army. Ground and air reconnaissance established the location of the rebels, their approximate strength is about 80 people.

With the units involved in the raid, tactical drills were held to block the villages and destroy the enemy in buildings with the support of tanks and artillery. In addition, motorized rifle companies, divided into battle groups, were preparing for

independent actions in isolation from the main forces. Mechanics, drivers of tanks and infantry fighting vehicles, drivers of armored personnel carriers and tractors were preparing for combat operations in the mountains in winter conditions. The preparation of equipment and weapons, reconnaissance and surveillance equipment, including night vision devices, was intensively carried out. Material resources were replenished, measures were taken to prevent frostbite of personnel. On the eve of the release, combat missions were set and interaction on the map was organized.



In the early morning of December 5, the raid detachment, having made a march about 40 km long, went to the area where, according to intelligence, the Shir-Aga detachment was supposed to be. Here the personnel dismounted, the artillery battalion took up firing positions near the road leading to the city of Herat.

The units on foot, deployed in a chain, began to advance in a northerly direction. By 10 o'clock, the 3rd motorized rifle and Afghan battalions reached the village of Khojadar, and the 1st motorized rifle battalion - to another village, which was located two kilometers northwest. No rebels were found in the settlements. They were not found in the neighboring villages either. Having conducted a search along the Davindar ridge 15 km deep to the east and 10 km

west of the village of Khojadar, the battalions descended from the mountains to the road. After completing this task, the 1st motorized rifle battalion with a tank company and an Afghan army battalion without one company left for a permanent deployment point. And the 3rd motorized rifle battalion continued the raid in a southerly direction to the northwestern slopes of the Banda-Sara ridge. Coming to the village of Shahabap, the detachment settled down to rest. The night passed quietly. Early in the morning, the battalion commander, Major A.P. Veresotsky announced a plan for further action and set combat missions for company commanders. The idea was to covertly go on foot to the villages of Chat, Pekhiysk. After that, the 7th motorized rifle company, reinforced with a mortar battery, in cooperation with a company of the Afghan army, block and destroy the enemy in the village of Chat. With the rest of the forces, block and destroy the enemy in the village of

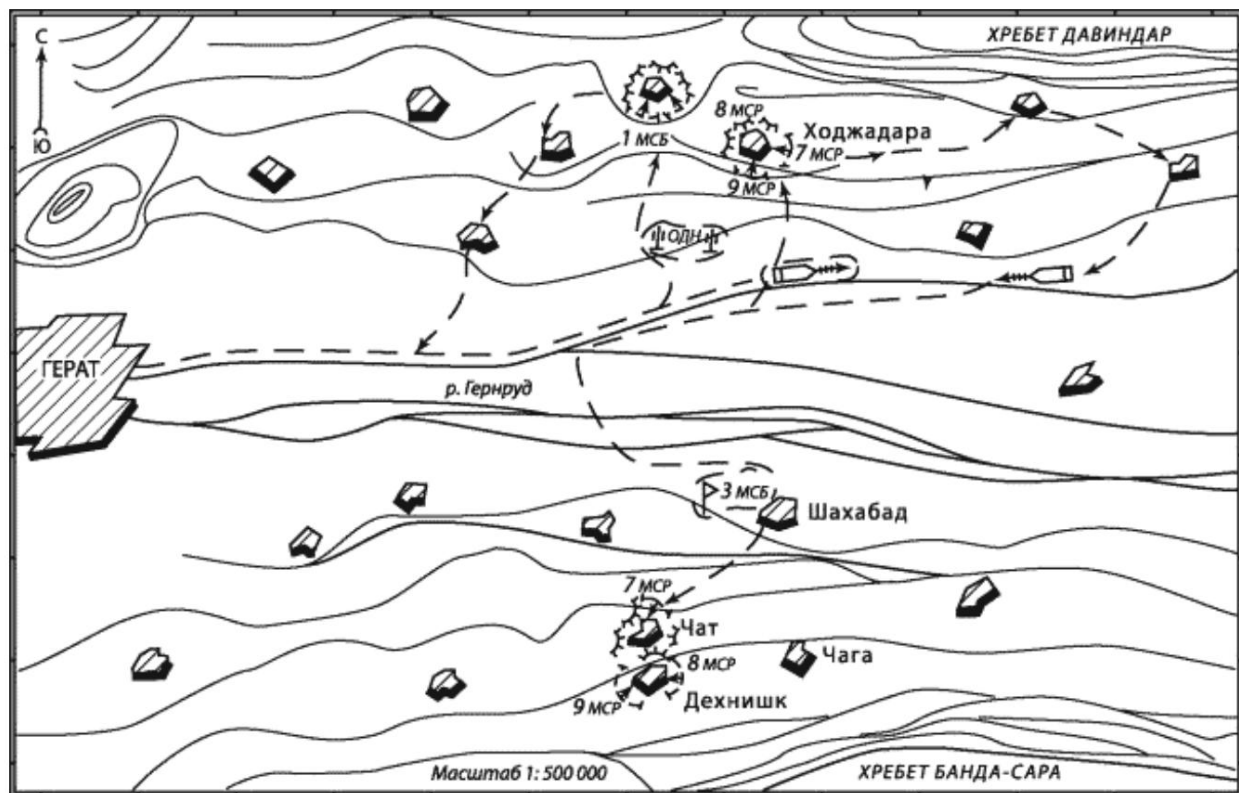
Dekhnishk. At 8 o'clock on December 5, the detachment began to carry out its combat mission. Four hours later, the head patrol of the 7th company on the outskirts of the village of Chat discovered ambush sites left by the enemy. The company, acting in combat groups under the command of lieutenants A. Chebykin and V. Nakhushev and ensign L. Samoevsky, began blocking the village. The dominant heights were occupied and all exits from it were blocked. With the beginning of the blockade, the rebels discovered the head patrol, which, having entered the battle, riveted the enemy's attention to itself. Therefore, the appearance of a company near the village turned out to be unexpected for the enemy. A company of the Afghan army began combing the village. Organized armed resistance was provided by only a few people who had taken refuge in one of the houses, led by the son of Shir-Aga. But this center of

resistance was destroyed after a while. As a result of the battle, the enemy lost 8 killed and 13 captured. 40 firearms and a large amount of ammunition were seized. The company lost one man killed and two wounded.

However, the goal was not fully achieved. Two other companies were unable to complete the task. The 7th company was discovered long before the exit of the 8th and 9th companies to the village of Dekhnishk. This made it possible for part of the rebels, led by Shir-Aga, to leave for

mountains. Convinced of the absence of the enemy, the detachment returned to the point of permanent deployment.

The raid lasted two days. It was characterized by a rapid change in the direction of troop actions, misleading the enemy by returning a significant part of the forces and means to the point of permanent deployment, high coordination of personnel actions, and confident control by unit commanders. To a large extent, this became possible due to the purposeful preparation of units for the raid. Subsequently, this approach became widespread in Afghanistan.



Joint raid by Soviet and Afghan units in December 1980

The first raids showed that the actions of the raiding parties in the valleys and along the roads were ineffective. The rebels, having well-placed reconnaissance and warning, in a timely manner revealed not only the advance of Soviet troops to the designated areas, but also the plan of the upcoming actions of their command. As a result, using convenient areas of the terrain, they organized ambushes on the route of the raiding detachment or took cover in a timely manner.

mountains, green zone, villages. The units of the Soviet troops assigned to the raid detachments, taught by the bitter experience of their predecessors, began to act more cautiously, abandoned straightforward movements, began to more widely practice various tricks and methods of deception and military cunning. So, the company commanded by Captain V.I. Sidyakin,

in 1980 it was necessary to make a raid in the mountains and capture the enemy's object in the gorge. The terrain was very difficult. High mountains with domed peaks, steep slopes and canyons complicated the movement. In addition, at every height, behind numerous boulders, there could be a hidden enemy, ready to open fire at any moment. The sentinel squad operating in front ensured the successful advance of the company. Setting a task for him, the company commander paid

special attention to identifying during the raid strong points and ambushes of the enemy, his firepower, as well as to reconnaissance of the area. To quickly troubleshoot equipment during the movement, a technical short circuit was created. The rear patrol followed the column at a distance of visual communication and fire interaction with the main

forces.

All-round observation was organized throughout the column. The weapon was in readiness for the immediate opening of fire in the established sectors. With the approach to the indicated area, the probability of fire from the enemy increased. The personnel, who were on the armor of infantry fighting vehicles, became a good target. The company commander, in order to disperse the motorized riflemen, gave the command to dismount the personnel and ordered them to turn around in battle formation.



"I understood," V.I. later recalled. Sidyakin - that the enemy, hiding behind rugged mountains, considers himself invulnerable from the flanks. Previous combat experience testified that Soviet units, not adapted to the specific conditions of mountainous terrain, in the first months of the war usually operated only along roads, neglected to a certain extent maneuver, detour and military cunning. As a result, their actions were often characterized by low effectiveness, the enemy managed to go into the mountains, and the units suffered losses. After receiving a combat mission, I was constantly tormented by the question - how to achieve the task and at the same time save the lives of my subordinates? Finally, I came to the conclusion that, despite the complexity of the terrain, it is necessary to move part of the forces along the ridges of the heights to the right of the road. It was this direction that seemed to me the most convenient for the retreat of the rebels into the mountains. To accomplish this task, one motorized rifle platoon was allocated. With two other platoons and reinforcements, he continued to move along the road at a distance that excluded the defeat of personnel from ambushes from the ridges of the mountains. These platoons advanced slowly, jumping from line to line.



It was impossible to allow the platoon on the right to be behind the company. In this case, his role would be reduced to zero. Therefore, despite the large expenditure of time, we were forced to move very slowly, in constant readiness for battle. After the start of the next leap forward, the dushmans opened fire on the company. The personnel lay down. I gave command to the supporting firepower. After a fire raid, the enemy tried to retreat to the mountains, but immediately came under fire from a platoon located on the crest of a height. This development of the situation turned out to be a complete surprise for the rebels, in whose ranks panic began. Taking advantage of this, the company captured the stronghold with a swift attack. In the combat

episode under consideration, the actions of the rebels were of a defensive nature. The conditions of the situation created the prerequisites for striking at the flank and rear of the enemy. The commander realized this opportunity and won a difficult battle.

However, in a number of cases, the maneuver during the raid did not lead to the desired results. The reasons for this were very different, but most often the lack of combat experience among newcomers to change commanders and personnel, low skills of individual officers in managing a unit in a difficult environment, forcing events by some higher commanders in the process of performing combat missions by their subordinates,

inconsistency of intelligence data with the real situation. Some of these reasons were manifested in the same raid in a neighboring company operating in a different direction. In full force,

the company advanced along the gorge in battle order and was met by enemy fire. Having concentrated the fire of the platoons from the spot, the unit suppressed the firing points of the dushmans and continued to move. However, soon it again came under fire from the rebels, who pressed the motorized riflemen to the ground. It became clear to the company commander that an attack from the front of the enemy from their positions could not be knocked out. Then he decided to make a detour with two platoons and stop the enemy from the rear. However, the maneuver failed, the rebels unraveled his plan and, realizing that there was only one platoon in front of them from the front, they launched a counterattack. Great efforts were required to repel this attack and save the personnel.



In the course of raid operations, in the interests of defeating the enemy, outflanking detachments were used. Major V.V. recalls one of such cases. Vishnevsky, who commanded a motorized rifle company in Afghanistan. In March, his company participated in a raid to capture the Durkakh Gorge in the Farah region, which had a T-shape and a depth of up to 1.5 km. It contained warehouses of rebels with weapons and food. The gorge itself was well fortified and prepared for defense, concrete trenches were located in several tiers, they contained various enemy fire weapons. The entrance to the gorge was covered by a mined blockage.

The commander of the reconnaissance company, which acted at the head of the raid detachment, decided to penetrate into the gorge, bypassing the blockage along the bed of a dry river. Without examining this route, he sent a unit along it, which was soon stopped due to the explosion of two infantry fighting vehicles on mines. Without drawing the proper conclusions, the commander hastened the personnel and led him further into the depths of the gorge. Dushmans, having let the scouts come closer, opened dagger fire on them from opposite slopes. The company was forced to accept the battle in extremely unfavorable conditions and only under the cover of darkness left the gorge, losing twelve people killed.



Taking into account the bitter experience of the scouts, Vishnevsky decided to act differently. At night, two platoons climbed the slopes of the gorge and, with sudden actions, occupied the trenches of the enemy, whose main forces at that time were descending for water and food. In the morning, these subunits secured the offensive of the third platoon along the bottom of the gorge with the fire of their assets. The success of this battle was determined by the night maneuver of the units, for

which the enemy was not ready. The next day, the main forces of the raid detachment entered the gorge and, having defeated the enemy, captured the only source of water in this area. As a result, the difficult raid ended successfully. More effective were the raids that were carried out jointly by Soviet and Afghan troops. The rich experience of

raids were acquired by the commander of the mountain battalion, Major K.I. Atangenzdshev. At the end of the first decade of December 1981, intelligence established a gathering of enemy armed groups in the village of Valikheil. Atangenzdshev's battalion was ordered to raid the rebels' assembly area, block the village and comb it. For reinforcement, he received a reconnaissance company, ZSU-2-4 combat vehicles and a sapper department. For support, a link of Mi-24 helicopters was allocated. In addition, two battalions of the Afghan army participated in the raid scheduled for December 24. It was decided

not to use military equipment in order to ensure secrecy and achieve surprise actions. Vehicles of the local population were used for transportation. In total, five trucks were involved, in which the Afghan drivers were temporarily replaced by Soviet soldiers. Having made a two-hour night march, the raid detachment

stopped 10 km from the area where the rebels were supposed to gather. He then continued on foot. During the

nomination by personnel, camouflage was observed, conversations and smoking were excluded, observation was carried out exclusively with the use of night vision devices. By dawn on December 24, the village of Valiheil was cut off from the mountains by ambushes from two motorized rifle companies and a reconnaissance company.



In the morning, according to the previously approved plan, the battalions of the Afghan army, in cooperation with the 3rd motorized rifle company, began combing the villages near the city of Baghlan. This was done with the aim of misleading the rebels in the village of Valiheil and forcing them to withdraw into the mountains in the direction of the ambushes. The combing of the villages was carried out by Afghan units, and the 3rd company acted on the flanks, preventing the retreat of the rebels in directions not covered by ambushes. With the beginning of the actions of distracting forces, the rebels, who were in the village of Valikheil, tried to go through the ravines into the mountains, which were only 200–300 m away. However, fire from ambushes blocked their way to salvation. 21 dushmans were captured and military trophies were captured, including a workshop for making mines. The success of this raid was ensured by the skillful joint actions of Soviet and Afghan units, strict observance of camouflage measures, and the use of military cunning in the interests of achieving

surprise. The activities of the duty forces were very similar to the raid actions. True, the duty forces were not looking for the enemy. They were aimed at a very specific object, the position and composition of which were precisely known. On average duty units

formations and units of the 40th army went out to carry out tasks for the implementation of intelligence 20–25 times a month (240–300 outputs per year), many of them were successful.



Major V.L. recalls one of these raids. Barnovolokov. The reason for holding it was the delay in the Anavas Gorge of two dushmans - instructors in shooting from hand grenade launchers. During interrogation, they testified that after the operation successfully carried out by the Soviet troops in May-June 1985, the rebels began to create warehouses in small villages, which, as a rule, were not paid attention to. According to the captives, in one of the houses in the village of Kalayi Mullovani, an ammunition depot for small arms was equipped, and in another, a medical depot.



After a brief assessment of the situation and the production of tactical calculations, it was decided to implement these data by the forces of two on-duty reconnaissance companies that were in constant combat readiness, the personnel of these units, who had previously participated in the defeat of the rebel base in the Anavas Gorge, knew the area of the forthcoming actions well. The idea of the command was to make a 40-kilometer march and by sudden actions of two outflanking detachments, each consisting of a platoon, from the east and west and with the main forces from the north to cover the village of Kalayi-Mullovani. The retreat of the rebels to the mountains in a southerly direction must be prevented by strikes from supporting aircraft. Special inspection teams were created to inspect the village and locate ammunition and medicine depots.

At 7 o'clock on August 16, a detachment consisting of two reconnaissance companies (without tank platoons), reinforced by a self-propelled artillery battery, an engineering platoon and a flamethrower squad, began to march, having a movement support detachment in front, at a distance of up to three kilometers. Infantry fighting vehicles and armored personnel carriers made it possible to move off-road without using tanks with trawls. When approaching the area of the combat mission, the bypassing detachments, including sappers and artillery spotters,

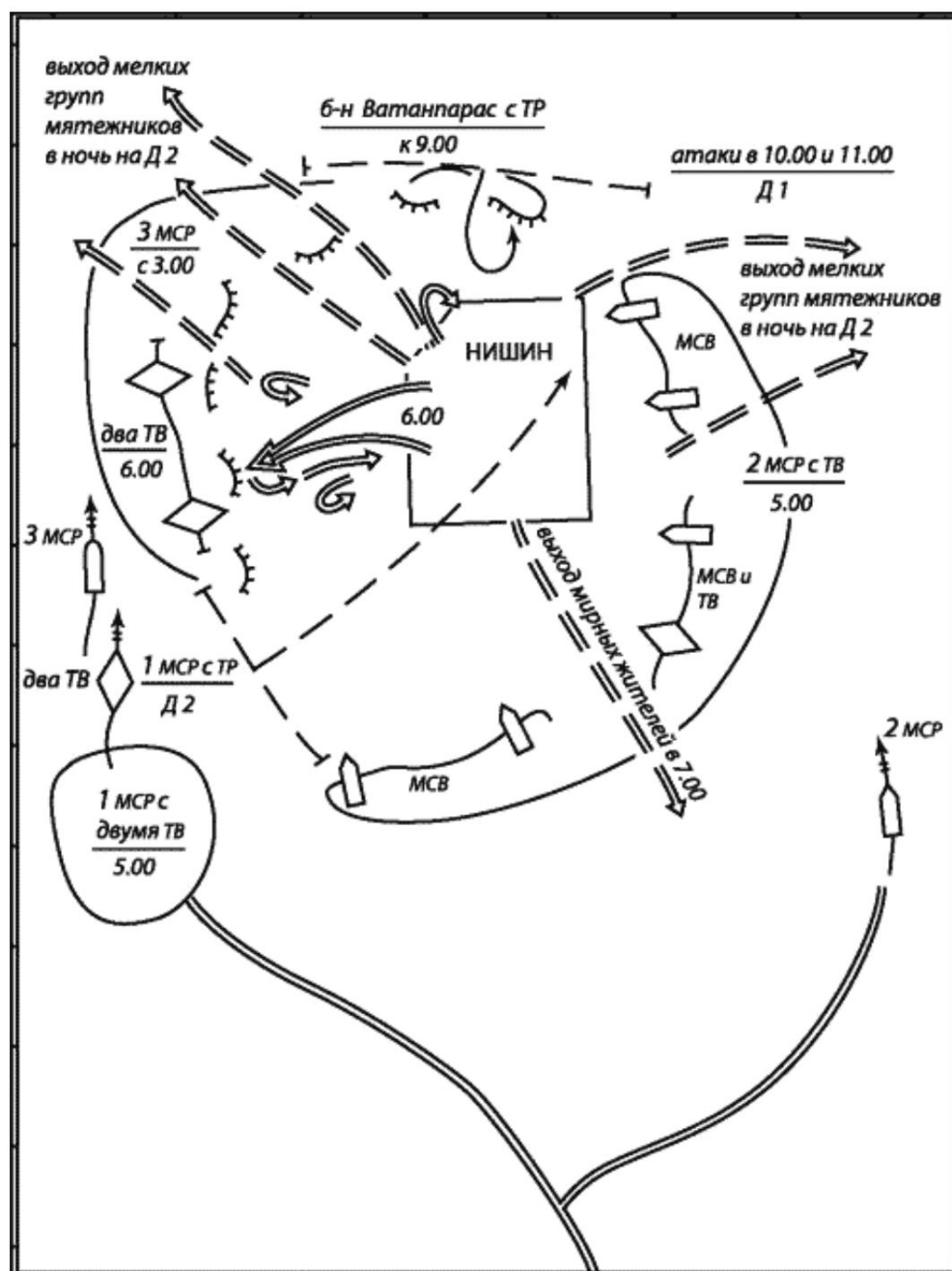
increased speed and by 9 hours 30 minutes occupied the indicated lines. Helicopters of fire support struck at the tops of the mountains, places of possible observation posts and positions of enemy fire weapons. The sudden exit of units to the village and helicopter strikes discouraged the rebels. This had a positive effect on the outcome of the battle and completely eliminated losses.

The testimonies of the prisoners turned out to be accurate. Warehouses of ammunition and medicines were

found in these houses. Practice shows that raids by duty units were not always successful. One of the reasons for this, according to the Afghan soldiers, was that the commanders and political workers, aimed at destroying the rebels in a particular area or village, sought to reach the combat mission area as quickly as possible. At the same time, during the march, they did not pay due attention to reconnaissance and security. These miscalculations were immediately exploited by the enemy. Units fell into ambushes and suffered heavy losses even during the nomination period. Major S.N. recalls one of these cases. Petrov: "According to intelligence, in the area of the settlement of Argankheil, in the zone of responsibility of one of the units, a well-armed group of rebels numbering up to 40 people operated.

The 3rd paratrooper battalion, which was a duty unit, received the task of advancing to the area of the village of Argankheil by 2 o'clock on March 20, 1982 and destroying the enemy. It was supported by an artillery battalion and two pairs of Mi-24 helicopters. By decision of the

battalion commander, the detachment advanced at night along one route, having a combat reconnaissance patrol ahead at a distance of about 300 m from the column of the main forces. The march passed along a wide straight road, on the left along which a duval stretched, and on the right a concrete canal (ditch) up to 5 m wide and up to 2.5 m deep.



Blocking and combing the village of Nishin in November 1980

Suddenly, through the loopholes in the duval, almost at close range, the enemy fired a volley of grenade launchers at the sentinel platoon. Almost simultaneously, a machine gun began to fire along the ditch from a house located no further than 150 m from the reconnaissance patrol. The paratroopers, trying to take up firing positions, fell, slain by enemy fire. The battalion commander called for artillery fire and

helicopters. The identified targets were destroyed, but the maneuver to encircle the enemy turned out to be belated. The rebels, inflicting a short and strong blow, disappeared using the system of karezes. The battalion, having lost eight people killed, including two officers, six people wounded, from further actions

refused.

My memory often brings me back to this tragic moment. I am looking for an answer to the constantly tormenting question - could such a tragic outcome have been avoided? In hindsight, of course, we can be very smart. At the same time, it seems to me that it is impossible not to note the following miscalculations that negatively affected the performance of the combat mission by duty units. Firstly, the battalion command did not take into account the fact that the battle in Afghanistan did not always occur where it was planned. It could start suddenly, in any place convenient for the enemy, at any time of the day. Previous combat experience testified that the duvals, located near the roads, always posed a serious danger to the Soviet troops. They provided the enemy with stealth and surprise actions. This factor was not taken into account. Secondly, the battalion column, having security only in front, advanced along one route, which made it very difficult to maneuver forces. I believe that with the possibility of movement off the road, the allocation of side guards could force the enemy to abandon the ambush. Thirdly, reconnaissance was not properly organized, and the readiness of personnel to use weapons was low. Thus, raid actions were widely used at the beginning of the second period of the armed struggle in Afghanistan. Their effectiveness was greatest, first of all, when the Soviet and Afghan purposeful training of personnel, weapons and equipment, and in the course of the raid, achieved high-quality reconnaissance, secrecy and surprise actions.

divisions

carried out a thorough

And

The raids took place as an independent tactical technique with the aim of controlling a certain territory (direction). But most often they were carried out with the aim of troops entering a certain area for its subsequent blocking and combing. At the same time, part

forces were allocated to create fixed roadblocks, and the other - for maneuverable combing forces.

At first, the blocking and combing of individual villages, in which, according to intelligence, there were rebels, had a number of significant drawbacks. An example of this is the operation in the area of the village of Nishin in November 1980. A Soviet motorized rifle battalion and a tank battalion and an infantry battalion of the Afghan government troops, reinforced by a tank company, were allocated for its implementation.

According to the plan, a

battalion of Afghan troops and one motorized rifle company of the Soviet Army were allocated to the blocking forces and took up positions around the village in advance at a distance of 600-1000 m. After that, all civilians were asked to leave the settlement for the duration of the operation. Then they began to advance

the combing force, consisting of two motorized rifle companies, reinforced by tank platoons. The advance of combing groups was carried out simultaneously from the east, south and west. Tanks and infantry fighting vehicles moved ahead, followed by motorized riflemen. The enemy on the

outskirts of the village took the fight, which lasted until the evening. Under the cover of night, spooks in small groups began to retreat to the north, identifying gaps in the combat formations of the blocking forces. As a result, only part of the dushman detachment was destroyed, the rest went to the mountains.

Under the crossfire of an ambush

Ambushes as an independent method of combat operations in Afghanistan were widely used in all types of combat. They were especially frequent near the Pakistani and Iranian borders. The essence of the ambushes consisted in the secret location of the subunits allocated for their device on the enemy's movement routes, and in the opening of sudden fire in order to destroy or capture the rebels, weapons and other transported property. They were held both during the day and

at night.

The organization and implementation of ambush operations in Afghanistan did not differ much from the recommendations that were set out in the charters and manuals. However, there were also some peculiarities. It should be noted that the ambushes organized by combined arms units in Afghanistan often went beyond purely reconnaissance tasks. They were arranged in order to prohibit the replenishment of bandit formations with personnel, weapons, ammunition, food and other materiel from a neighboring state. Ambush actions made it possible to inflict tangible losses on the enemy, to prevent the approach of reserves, to block his actions on the approaches to communications, airfields and other important objects.

The ambush arrangement was usually assigned to a motorized rifle, reconnaissance, paratrooper platoon (company), reinforced with one or three crews of AGS-17 automatic grenade launchers and two or three sappers or a sapper squad with anti-tank and anti-personnel mines. Sometimes a battalion was involved in ambush operations. In this case, from the allocated battalion, as a rule, two or three ambushes were set up simultaneously for a period of 4-5 days, which were combined into a common system of ambushes under the leadership of the battalion commander. In addition, at the nearest airfield, for the entire time the unit was in an ambush,

one or two pairs of combat helicopters were on duty, and at the battalion's deployment point, from which the ambush stood out, there was an armored company on duty. The means of communication available in the ambush provided communication inside the ambush with

superior commander, as well as with an armored group, supporting artillery and combat helicopters.

Depending on the tasks to be solved, during operations in an ambush, as a rule, several groups were created. The fire engagement group included AGS-17 crews, grenade launchers, machine gunners and snipers, it was intended to destroy the enemy in the selected area by creating a continuous fire zone. A capture group of 5-7 of the most courageous and physically strong sergeants and soldiers was created to capture prisoners, documents and weapons. The support group, with strength up to a platoon, covered the flanks and rear of the ambush and ensured the withdrawal of personnel to the assembly and evacuation point after completing the combat mission. To conduct reconnaissance of the enemy and timely notify the main ambush forces about him, observation posts of 2-3 people each were set up.



In addition to these groups, others were created to perform specific tasks. So, from the assigned sappers for the device of mine-explosive barriers, a mining group was created. Sometimes it was reinforced by motorized rifles. From infantry fighting vehicles and

armored personnel carriers of the units that were in ambush, an armored group was created. It was located secretly in the area, as a rule, 5–7 km from the ambush site. Such a removal ensured its rapid withdrawal to the unit to provide fire assistance, as well as to ensure its withdrawal after the task was completed. In the event that the ambushes were carried out at night, a lighting support group was created to illuminate the area. The decision to conduct an ambush was

made, as a rule, by a senior commander on the basis of intelligence data; ambush planning was carried out, as a rule, according to two options. The first option provided for the planning of ambushes based on a monthly reconnaissance plan with pre-approved locations and times for their implementation. The second option allowed for planning ambushes based on promptly received information. In practice, the latter option proved to be more effective. In both cases, an ambush plan was drawn up. It indicated two or three places

for ambushes, routes of advance, locations for the armored group, the main issues of interaction with aviation, artillery and the nearest outposts, the organization of communications, as well as the combat and numerical strength of the ambush forces. The combat task of the units for conducting an ambush was set by the senior commander. He

indicated the necessary information about the enemy. Then he determined the purpose of the ambush, the time, place of its conduct, the composition of the group and means of reinforcement, the area of disembarking or landing, the procedure for completing the task, as well as the organization of communications day and night and aviation call signals. In addition, the group commander was instructed on the procedure for preparing the group for actions in an ambush, measures to keep its design secret, and also what had been done to mislead the enemy. Since almost all ambushes were carried out at night, the order of lighting was indicated. When it was planned to support an ambush with artillery fire, the group commander was informed what fire means were assigned for this, as well as signals for calling, ceasing and correcting fire. The equipment of personnel for action in an ambush was thought out especially carefully. It

included personal weapons, 1.5-2 ammunition

ammunition, 2-8 hand grenades, bayonet-knives, night vision devices, night sights, lighting and signal cartridges. For the entire duration of the ambush, dry rations and a supply of drinking water were issued. In the cold season and when going to high-mountainous regions, under overalls, the personnel put on insulated uniforms.

Preparations for action in ambush began with the study of intelligence received from various sources. At the same time, their reliability was determined, the terrain was assessed, and expedient methods of action were chosen that were not previously used by Soviet troops in this area. In addition, the order of the unit's exit to the ambush site was established, as well as measures to misinform the enemy regarding the planned hostilities. With the acquisition of combat experience, the procedure for evacuating the wounded and killed, prisoners and captured weapons began to be specified. As a rule, the subunits assigned to the ambush were thoroughly prepared, which lasted from several hours to several days. At this time, the commanders of the units assigned to the ambush paid great attention to organizing training sessions with personnel on the ground. As a rule, the place of employment was chosen far from the point of permanent deployment and the alleged place of the ambush, but with a terrain similar to the area of the forthcoming operations. In the classroom, as the participants in the hostilities in Afghanistan, officers V. Alekseenko, A. Borisov, I. Ivonnik, L. Tretyakov and others testify, various options for actions in an ambush were practiced with personnel. Particular attention was paid to the issues of interaction, continuous and thorough monitoring. Exceptional importance was attached to the preparation of military equipment and weapons for combat operations in the

mountains, in extreme heat, with sharp changes in daily temperature and pressure, strong winds and dusty air in summer, frost, ice and heavy snowfalls in winter. Each soldier prepared the fixed weapon personally under the control of the commander. In addition, each batch of cartridges was checked by control shots. Before entering the task, all stores and boxes were equipped. Moreover, special attention was paid to their cleanliness and reliable operation of the spring. Isolated from each other objects that make a sound during

movement. The condition of batteries for radio stations and night sights was checked. Prepared devices for silent shooting. Night sights were verified. After shooting, the weapon was cleaned, lubricated and wiped dry. Fuses in grenades, as a rule, were inserted in advance



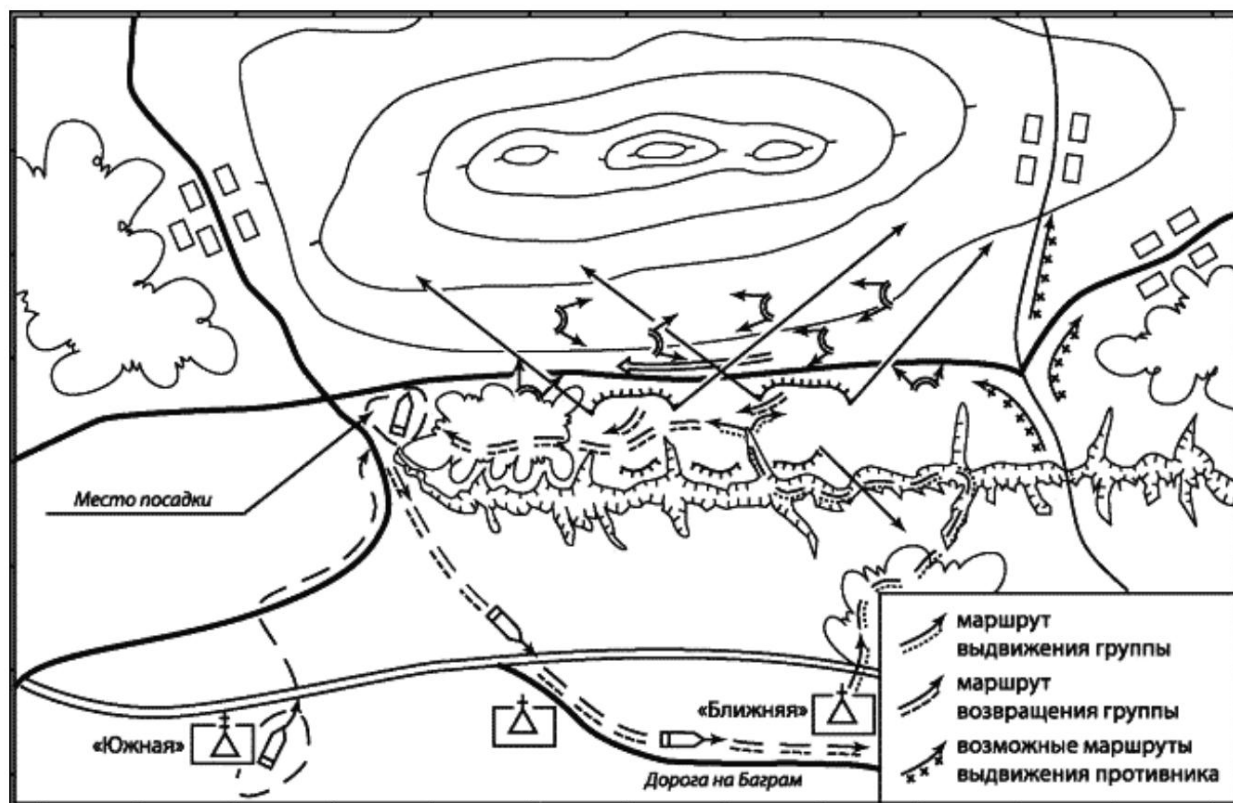
The units advanced to the ambush site in various ways: on military equipment, on cars, on helicopters, on foot. The advance, as a rule, was carried out at night. The success of the entire combat mission often depended on his organization. An example of this is the case that in June 1983 occurred in a motorized rifle battalion, where Major R.S. served. Zarifov. This battalion was given the task of organizing an ambush on the southwestern outskirts of the village of Nawabad in order to destroy an armed opposition detachment operating there, numbering up to 200 people.

The advance to the village, located 17 km west of Kunduz, was planned to be carried out on the night of June 4 on military equipment, and then to the ambush site on foot. The battalion had 4–5 hours to prepare for the task. At 22:00 on June 3, the task was refined. For the purpose of camouflage, the battalion was ordered to advance on foot. However, it was not taken into account that

the location of the regiment to the specified area is about 20 km and they must be passed at night. As a result, the battalion did not reach the ambush site at the appointed time. Moreover, at dawn, he himself fell into an ambush, from which he then left for five hours, having losses.

From this example it follows that the observance of stealth and speed of advance was the most important condition for the success of an ambush. To achieve this, various methods of military cunning were used. So, the advance to the ambush site of a motorized rifle platoon under the command of Senior Lieutenant V.N. Popov in April 1984, armored on, were used for duty personnel carriers, which were usually carried on this route.

The company of Senior Lieutenant Yu.N. Petrov in April 1987. First, by decision of the commander, she was transferred to the Blizhnyaya outpost, located on the Kabul-Salang highway, in cars carrying food. Further advance to the ambush site was carried out on foot at night. To support the actions of the company, its armored group, under the guise of strengthening the protection of roads, went to the Yuzhnaya outpost two days before the ambush. Such a separate exit of the unit made it possible to hide the ambush site from the enemy, who soon fell into a trap prepared for him.



Ambush of a reinforced reconnaissance company west of Bagram in April 1987

Taking into account the high possibilities of enemy observation of the exit of ambush forces into the indicated area, false and distracting methods have found wide application in Afghanistan. The first trick was to simulate the coverage of an intermediate object by an armored group. Moving at low speed, the armored group secretly landed troops, then covered an intermediate object and was in readiness to support the ambush.



The second technique was to use "doubles". To implement it, the composition of the ambush took place on the armor, and the "twins" inside the combat vehicles. In a place sheltered from possible observation, the main composition of the ambush dismounted at low speed, and their places on the armor were occupied by "twins". The fighting vehicles were descending to an intermediate object, where they were in readiness to support an ambush.

The essence of the third technique was to advance the subunit to a distracting object with the landing of ambush personnel there and the transition to an intermediate object. After the landing, the personnel secretly advanced to the ambush site, and the combat vehicles moved to the intermediate object and waited for the established signal.

The fourth technique received the code name "call on yourself." For its implementation, an undermining or breakdown of military equipment was simulated in a predetermined place. The crew proceeded to repair, and the fire group, which was inside the armored vehicle, took measures to destroy the enemy. The column, continuing the march, landed personnel for an ambush in a chosen place.



The next method was to transfer the unit to the ambush area with a convoy of vehicles that daily followed the food. His disembarkation was carried out on the move when the column passed unobserved areas. Subsequently, the personnel secretly went out to places of rest and ambushes.

The next trick was to deliver the unit by helicopter to the drop area, 5-12 km away from the ambush site. In order to mislead the enemy about the true landing site, the helicopters made 2-3 false landings. The disembarkation of personnel from helicopters was usually carried out 15-20 minutes before dark. After landing, the subunit secretly assembled at the assembly point, which was usually located 200–400 m from the landing site, and at night advanced on foot to the ambush site. In all cases, the advance from the dismounting area to the ambush site was carried out in a

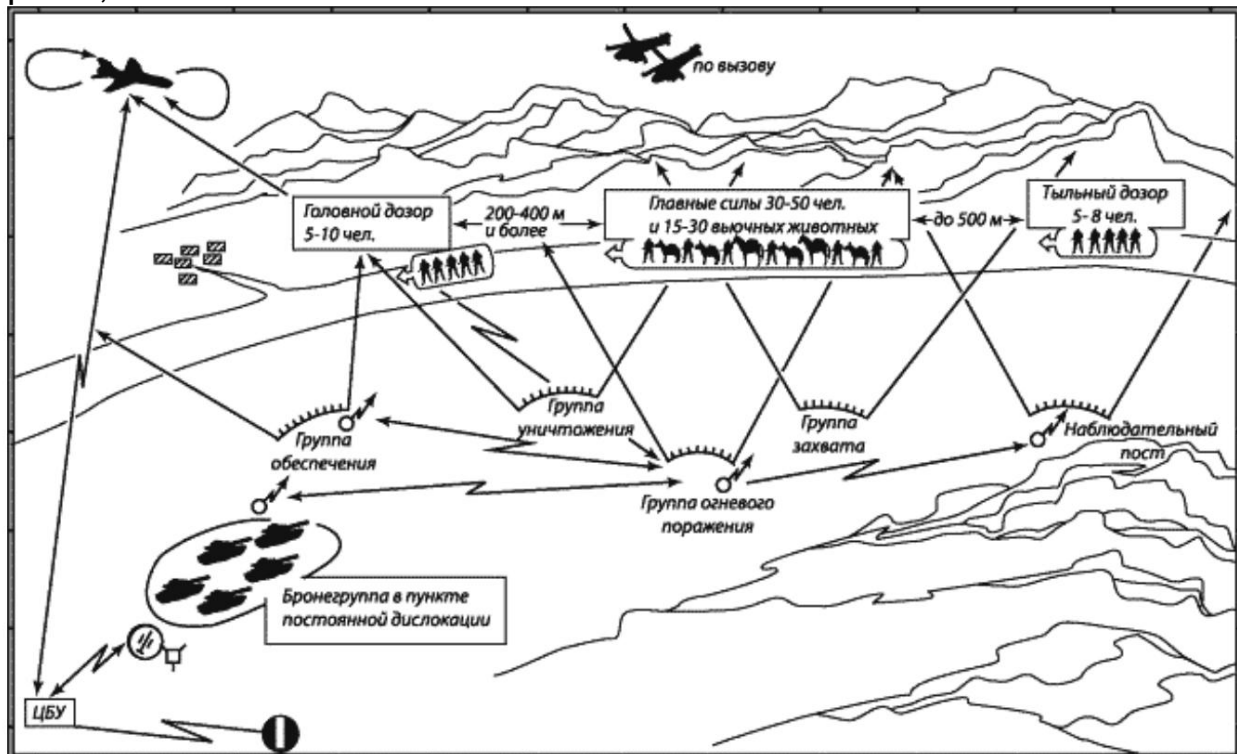
column of one or two subunits. At the same time, all-round observation was carried out, short stops were periodically made for listening and a more careful examination of the area. Marching guards were sent forward from the main group, and the rear patrol closed the column. For direct protection and inspection of the area, the head squad (platoon) commander

sent a watch. As a rule, it consisted of two people, usually armed with silent weapons. Light equipment allowed the patrol to move quickly, freely overcome obstacles, take advantageous firing positions, and, if necessary, engage in silent combat with the enemy. Over the years, a clear tactic for the actions of the sentinels has been developed. When moving, each of them had its own sector of observation: one - forward and to the right, the other - forward and to the left. It was also established that when meeting with the enemy, one sentinel fires or hand-to-hand combat, the second observes and only in case of urgent need supports the actions of a comrade with fire. At night and in difficult mountainous areas with closed terrain, the movement was carried out in stages. At each stage, the area was carefully examined in sectors and listened to. Then the movement began to the previously indicated landmark at a distance of 200–300 m. At the same time, the personnel had weapons in readiness for the immediate opening of fire. Moreover, the next group (platoon) began to move only when the previous one occupied an advantageous position and was ready to repel an enemy attack. So, jumping from one shelter to another, the entire unit moved in the danger zone. Here, as noted by the participants in the events, it was extremely important that each soldier clearly knew his duties in conducting surveillance and opening fire. The main thing is that the rebels do not take the unit by surprise. At this moment, the role of the commander is especially great, who is obliged to clearly give commands to open fire, briefly set or clarify tasks for observing, illuminating and blinding the enemy.

During a sudden attack by the rebels during the advance to the ambush site, his attack was repelled by the fire of all means. To quickly open fire from an automatic grenade launcher, as evidenced by senior lieutenant A. Kravchenko, as well as officers A. Khomenko, V. Kulikov, firing was carried out using a special device from the back of the assistant gunner AGS-17. The correct choice

of areas and positions in the place of the ambush was the main condition for success. Combat experience has shown that they were selected in places that made it possible to covertly place subunits in ambush, provide surveillance, and create "firing

bags". Ambushes were divided into several types according to tasks, place, time and methods of action.



The actions of the reconnaissance group in an ambush to destroy caravan

The most common were ambushes, which were arranged on the routes of movement of enemy caravans. Dushmans used about 80 routes to guide caravans with weapons and other means. The 30 caravan routes coming from Pakistan and Iran were especially actively used. On the territory of these states, weapons and ammunition intended for shipment to Afghanistan were delivered by road to the state border or directly to transshipment bases in the border zone, where caravans were formed. When choosing routes for movement through the territory of Afghanistan, the enemy, as a rule, avoided the template and often changed them. The routes used by the rebels were sections of the terrain that had good passability, providing maximum secrecy of movement and invulnerability from the effects of aviation. Usually, a few days before crossing the border of the caravan with weapons, informers were sent ahead.

Caravans moved mainly at night, less often during the day, but, as a rule, in weather conditions that were difficult for aviation. Sometimes when moving during the day, Lieutenant Colonel S.L. Brewster, a caravan with weapons and ammunition could "cling" to a peaceful caravan, as, for example, it was in the province of Helmand. On the chosen route of movement, before the caravan, cars with contraband cargo or household items of returning refugees, as well as nomads or scouts, who left conventional signs on certain sections of the route, usually passed. Often, along the route of the caravan, the rebels drove cattle in order to determine the places of ambushes and mined areas of the area. In the daytime, the caravan stopped at pre-selected and prepared days, as a rule, in villages, gorges, caves, groves and other places, carefully masking them. For each group, a route was allocated and the final point of arrival was indicated. Most often, caravans followed directly to active gangs, bypassing intermediate bases and warehouses. Traffic safety was ensured by a well-organized system of marching security, reconnaissance and warning on routes. To carry out reconnaissance and warning tasks, the rebels often used peaceful

population.



Faced with the first ambushes of the Soviet troops, the rebels began to improve the tactics of actions when escorting caravans, the composition of the marching guard of caravans was significantly strengthened, and the actions of dushmans when meeting with the enemy became more clear and cruel. Given sufficient manpower and means, the rebels sought to bypass the ambush and destroy it by attacking the flank or rear. In the absence of an advantage in forces and means, they, as a rule, retreated to an alternate route, leaving cover in front of them. In this regard, the arrangement of ambushes by platoon forces no longer gave tangible results. Therefore, usually motorized rifle and reconnaissance companies, reinforced by engineering units and supported by artillery fire, began to be involved in ambushes.

An instructive example is the ambush carried out by a reinforced motorized rifle company northeast of Jalalabad in early October 1986. As Major V.P. Podvorny, who served in Afghanistan as a senior assistant to the chief of the brigade's operational department, is of particular interest because the company managed to immediately block three routes of possible escort of rebel caravans. After the company left for the ambush site, by 2300 hours, a battle order was

created, a fire system was organized, and the joints and flanks were covered by minefields. The enemy was not long in coming. At half past one in the night, a marching guard of the caravan appeared on route No. 1, which by one o'clock went to the positions of the second platoon. The rebel caravan itself stretched up to 1.5 km.

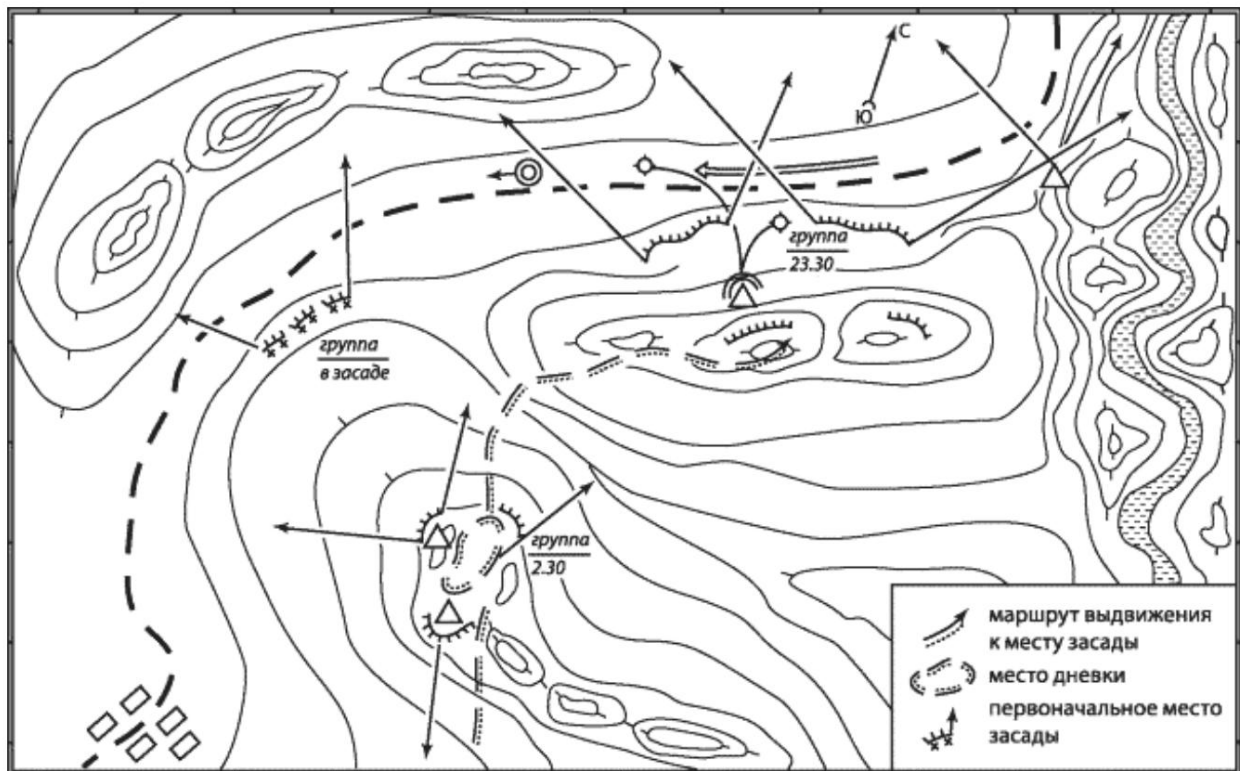
The company commander, having assessed the situation, concluded that most of the caravan was in front of the front of two platoons, and gave the command to open fire. Artillery fire was called in to destroy the rear guard. As a result, part of the caravan was destroyed. The rest of the forces and means of the rebels, due to the delay in the opening of artillery fire, managed to withdraw. However, the company did not leave the ambush site.

At 5 o'clock in the morning, a caravan was discovered already on route No. 2. The enemy expected that, as usual, a small group was operating in an ambush, which, naturally, would not be able to simultaneously block

multiple routes. In addition, knowing the tactics of ambush actions of the Soviet troops, he assumed that after inflicting fire damage, the group would leave the ambush area. But he was wrong.

With the exit of the caravan to the positions of the third and fourth platoons, he came under dagger fire from Soviet soldiers. Part of the caravan was destroyed, the rest of the rebels, leaving the cargo, went to the mountains.

In the spring and summer of 1987, the opposition stepped up its militant activities. This required an increase in the number and intensity of supplies of weapons, ammunition and other military equipment from abroad. As a result, on the basis of previously gained experience, the order of passing caravans has somewhat changed. The delivery of materiel from the border with Pakistan to the base areas in Afghanistan began to be carried out by large caravans, consisting of 250-300 pack animals. Then these caravans were broken up into smaller packs of 15-30 and were sent along mountain paths to the places of deployment of detachments and groups.



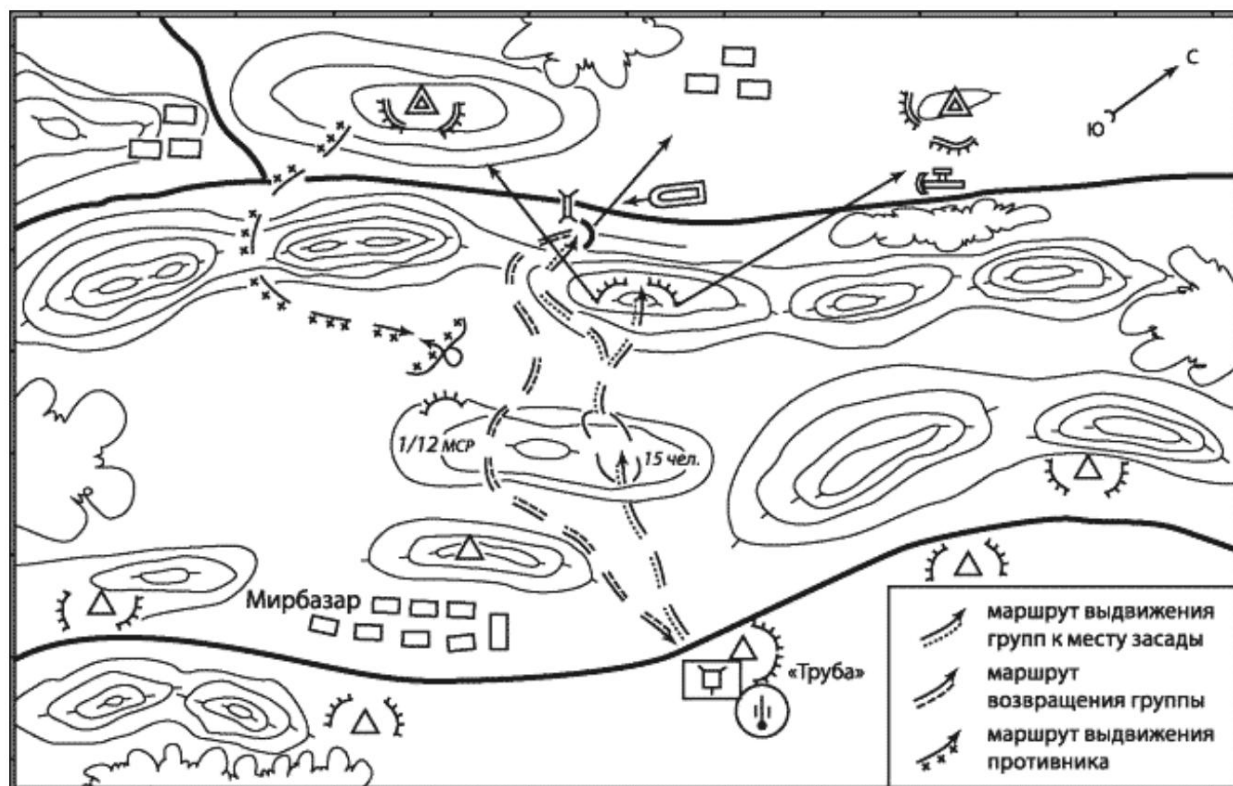
Ambush on the Jakopay mountain trail in August 1987

During this period, having studied the ambush tactics of Soviet units quite well, the rebels made for themselves

relevant conclusions. So, when caravans were escorted during the day, the trails in places most convenient for setting up ambushes were blocked 2–3 hours before the caravan approached. Two or three armed observers were posted on them every 200–300 m. Only after that did the caravans cross the dangerous place at intervals of an hour. If the caravan traveled at night, then the trails were checked before dusk by one or two sentinels, who followed unarmed under the guise of shepherds, often with children.



The escort of the caravan was carried out in compliance with all precautionary measures. Ahead of him, at 200–400 m, a head patrol consisting of 5-10 people advanced. A caravan followed the patrol, in which, as a rule, there was one driver for two pack animals. Behind the caravan was guarded by a rear patrol consisting of 5-3 people. The entire personnel of the caravan had small arms.



Ambush by a reconnaissance platoon in territory controlled by adversary

To capture such a caravan, up to a company, reinforced by artillery, stood out. Combat helicopters were deployed to support its operations from the air. Observation of the area of military operations in a number of cases was carried out by aviation.

The ground forces of the ambush were divided into several groups. Observation posts were set up from the side of the approach of the caravan. The main forces created groups of fire destruction, capture and support, which were located at a distance of 50 to 200 m from the route. Under favorable conditions, an armored group and supporting artillery were located in the rear at a distance of 5–7 km from the ambush site, and if possible, closer. Combat helicopters were based in places of permanent deployment or on temporary sites in readiness to support the actions of ground forces with fire. Between all groups established ground communication by radio. Such ambushes, as a rule, turned out to be quite effective. An example of this is the ambush organized on the Jakopai trail at the end

August 1987 by a group led by the battalion commander Major V.I. Short.

The task

of conducting the ambush was received on 27 August. The place of the ambush was determined by the Yakopay trail, which ran 12 km from the point of permanent deployment of the unit and was one of the main communications of the opposition forces operating in the area. To carry out the combat mission, it was decided to allocate a detachment of 45 people, which was personally led by the battalion commander. It consisted of 24 people from an airborne assault company and 12 from a reconnaissance platoon, as well as two people each from an engineer company, a communications platoon, a chemical protection platoon, a doctor and a paramedic of the b

The preparation of the detachment was carried out according to an abbreviated program on the ground, similar in relief to the area of forthcoming operations. Observers and all the necessary combat groups, which were prepared by their commanders, were allocated from the detachment. The interaction of groups was organized according to the map and on the layout of the area. At the same time, several places for setting up an ambush and various methods of troop actions during it were foreseen in

advance. Having started moving at 20:30 on August 28, the detachment finished climbing the mountains six hours later and, in compliance with camouflage measures, settled down for the day 1.5 km from the trail. Toward evening, observers reported on the advance of the caravan in the direction of the village. With the onset of darkness, the group rushed out to the trail and prepared for battle. However, after waiting until 2 am on August 30, the battalion commander came to the conclusion that there would be no escort of the caravan that night. He decided to return to the place of the day, pick up the abandoned property and, changing the place of the ambush, move to the trail.



In the afternoon, observers reported that 30 armed rebels had entered the trail and set up posts. Naturally, in these conditions it was no longer possible to achieve surprise. Therefore, the battalion commander decided to conduct it in another place, which he reported to the unit commander. Having received permission, the group began to advance at 18:00. Having overcome 5 km in the mountains, by 23:30 she reached a new ambush area and in 10-15 minutes she was ready for battle. By this time, the caravan had already begun to be drawn into the gorge. Having missed the watch, at the signal of the battalion commander, the group opened fire. Its effectiveness was facilitated by the light supply of the area. Within minutes, the caravan was destroyed. By 8 o'clock the group reached the landing area on armored personnel carriers, departed without

loss to the location of the unit. Commanders conducting ambushes in desert areas found themselves in the most difficult conditions, especially in summer. This was due to the fact that they did not have reliable data on the routes of the enemy caravans, which could move in any part of the terrain, and all of them could not be intercepted by small ambush forces. Under these conditions, the initiative, resourcefulness and creativity of the commander were required, who independently had to determine the place of the ambush and, depending on the prevailing situation, direct its actions.

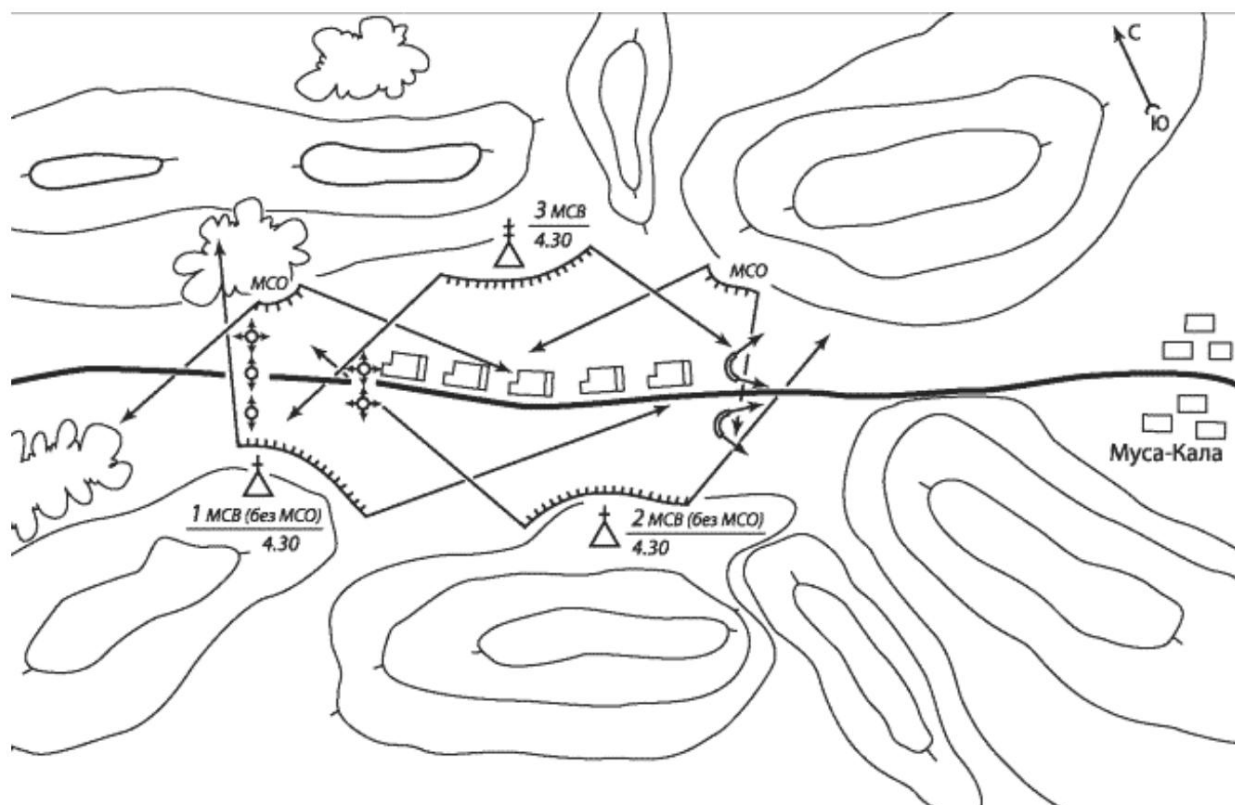
To carry out a combat mission, a small ambush group was usually allocated, most often as part of a platoon, which advanced to the area in 5-10 days and, "lost" in the desert, waited for a column of enemy vehicles in a chosen place. The long period of the ambush was due to the fact that it took time to get away from the observation of the shepherds, who warned the rebels with smoke about the passage of Soviet units. In this regard, the problem of providing personnel with water and food was especially acute. Therefore, they usually took up to 1.5 tons of water in an ambush, and firewood for cooking. Success in conducting an ambush depended largely on knowledge of the terrain and skillful use of them for camouflage.

personnel.

In winter, up to three reconnaissance groups were usually allocated from a battalion to carry out ambush operations in the desert. These groups went out into the desert as a base camp, where they rested during the day. With the onset of darkness, they dispersed 30-50 km from the camp in different directions and carried out a combat mission. In this case, it was also a great difficulty how to deceive the shepherds, who at that time drove the flocks into the desert and covered almost all ambushes with smoke.

The most difficult, as combat experience shows, was to carry out ambushes in territory controlled by the enemy. In this case, as a rule, the most trained platoon was assigned to carry out the combat mission, which was reinforced by AGS-17 automatic grenade launchers and sappers. The general leadership of these forces was carried out personally by the company commander.

One of these ambushes led by the commander of the airborne assault company, Captain V.A. Stolbinsky was held in February 1987 near the Pakistani border. The complexity of its organization lay in the fact that when advancing to the ambush site, it was necessary to overcome three mountain ranges, the approaches to which were under enemy surveillance around the clock. To open this surveillance system, an observation post "Pipe" was created. It took three weeks to uncover the location of the enemy's observation posts and outline the route of advance to the upcoming ambush site.



Ambush of a reinforced motorized rifle company in Kandahar province

A few days before the ambush, the unit was secretly withdrawn to the outpost "Pipe" under the guise of changing troops. It was decided to advance to the ambush site on New Year's Eve according to the Muslim calendar, when the vigilance of the dushmans could be lower than usual.

On the night before the ambush, the unit began to advance to the intended location. 5 km from him, 16 people were left with the deputy platoon commander senior sergeant R.A. Usmanov with the task of ensuring the withdrawal of capture, cover and observer groups. The remaining 10 people, led by the company commander, reached the ambush site by 2 o'clock in the morning. Since there were no shelters near the road, the company commander decided to use a pipe to accommodate the capture group, which ran under the road along the dry bed of a wide stream. It housed officers V. Stolbinsky, A. Kholod, Sergeant A. Babaev, privates I. Dzhumaev and A. Sivushkin. Five people under the leadership of the squad leader Sergeant V.A. Sakhnov with an AGS-17 and a Kalashnikov machine gun took up a position at an altitude of 800 m from the road with the task of observing and

support the capture team with fire. Communication between groups was carried out by radio. At 9 o'clock, Sergeant V. Sakhnov reported that about 150 rebels had gathered in a clearing 400 meters from the pipe, who were engaged in practicing combat techniques. So two days passed. The caravan did not show up. On the third day, the commander decided to capture one of the vehicles and leave for the outpost. At 12 o'clock, cyclists with weapons approached the ambush site. When they were 20 meters away, the group jumped out onto the road and captured the rebels. This was followed by a report by Sergeant V. Sakhnov about the movement of a passenger car and a group of motorcyclists along the road. When the car approached the pipe at 70 m, the capture group jumped out onto the road and opened fire. As a result of the ambush, five rebels were killed, including the leader of a large detachment and his adviser, weapons and documents were seized.

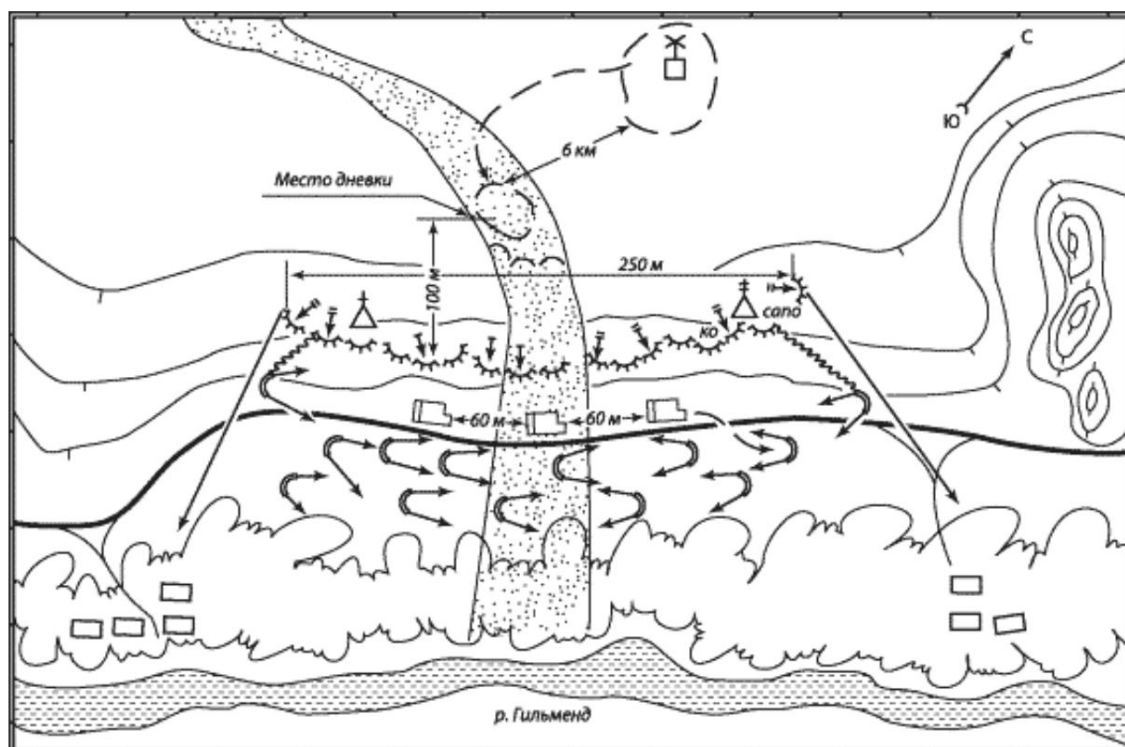
After completing the task, the capture group began to leave for the mountains. Dushmans from nearby villages tried on motorcycles and tractors to cut off the retreat of the unit, but they were stopped by artillery fire called by the company commander from the outpost. Thanks to this, the platoon returned to the point of permanent deployment without losses, having rich trophies. In

Afghanistan, there were frequent cases of organizing ambushes along the probable routes of the enemy's exit from the areas of blocking and combing. Major V.I. recalls one of these ambushes. Pavlenko. It was carried out during the blocking and combing carried out by Soviet troops in the area of the village of Musa-Kala, located in the vicinity of Kandahar. There, according to intelligence, a large detachment of rebels was based, which ensured the transfer of goods from Pakistan to Afghanistan.

The brigade commander who led this operation decided to block the village from the north and southeast with two battalions, and comb it with an air assault battalion in cooperation with Afghan units. To prevent the enemy from retreating to the northwest, it was

decided to organize an ambush by the forces of a motorized rifle company delivered there by transport helicopters. The company received only two hours to prepare for this task. During this time, a decision was made on the map, the battle order of the unit was created,

interaction of combat groups was organized, equipment was produced personnel.



Parachute platoon ambush in Helmand province in December 1984

In the evening, the company landed on helicopters and after 30 minutes was taken to the designated area, located at a distance of 5 km from the site of the upcoming ambush. The advance to the ambush site took place at night in compliance with camouflage measures. Each platoon was divided into two groups, which moved in a column of two at a distance of visual communication, with paired sentinels in front and behind. A patrol squad operated ahead of the company.

With the exit to the ambush area, the positions of platoons and squads were determined in such a way that part of the forces was at the entrance and exit from the area, and the main forces were in the center of the ambush area. Surveillance was organized in all platoons and squads. The sappers laid mines on the road. By four o'clock in the morning the company was ready to carry out the combat mission.

An hour later, the village of Musa-Kala was blocked by Soviet troops from the north and south, after which a thorough combing of the area began. The rebels took the fight and undercover

fire tried to evacuate warehouses with weapons and ammunition in the mountains. However, a convoy of cars with cargo on the way was ambushed. In this battle, the enemy lost 46 people killed and captured. Five vehicles with military cargo were destroyed. One member of the ambush was killed and five wounded.

Sometimes the need to conduct ambushes directly on the arose territory controlled by Soviet troops. Most often, this was a consequence of the implementation of intelligence information about the movement of rebel forces. To destroy them, fire ambushes were organized directly along the routes, which, in their construction, were not much different from defense. An example of such actions is an ambush conducted under the

command of the commander of the parachute company, Captain A.A. Tolkachev in the province of Helmand in December 1984. The basis for its conduct was information about the movement of a detachment of rebels numbering up to 50 people in cars towards Kandahar. To solve this problem, a group of 25 people was allocated from the company, reinforced by five Kalashnikov machine guns.



The delivery of the group to the area of the upcoming hostilities was carried out using helicopters. After making two false landings, the group was landed in an area located 6 km from the intended ambush site.

The ambush site was chosen on the slopes of the mountains, directly approaching the road. A controlled minefield was set up on the other side of the road. The unit secretly took up firing positions at a front of about 250 m. The conditions of the terrain made it possible to organize observation of the road at a distance of 3–5 km.

A few hours later, five trucks filled with people approached the ambush site. When they entered the zone of prepared fire of the unit, warning shots were fired from one of the heights on top of the column. The dushmans answered the shots with powerful fire, thereby completely

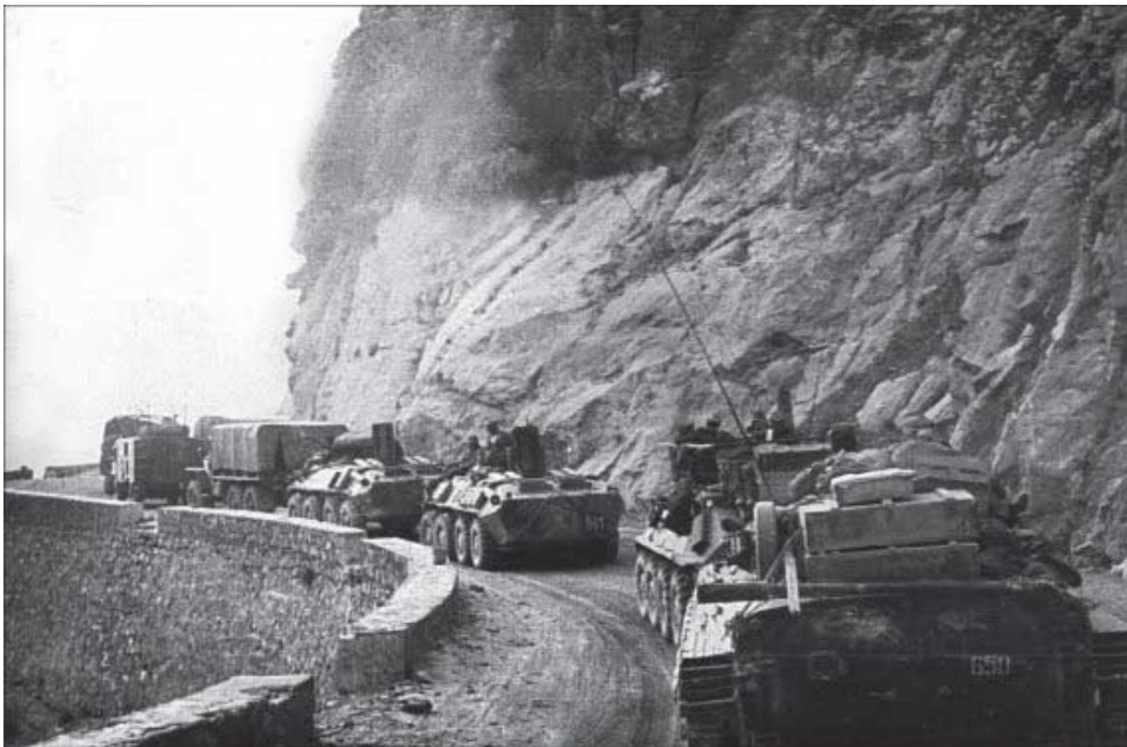
revealing his belonging to the forces of the opposition. After that, the signal was given to open fire by the main forces of the ambush. Within ten minutes the column was destroyed. Dushmans lost 44 people killed and captured. There were no casualties in the Soviet division.

Thus, the fighting in Afghanistan showed that ambushes were a fairly effective way to deal with the rebels on the routes of their advances. At the same time, the units that carried out ambushes, as a rule, with smaller forces, achieved significant results. The ambushes contributed to the control by the Soviet command over significant areas of the terrain by intercepting the likely routes of movement of caravans with weapons and ammunition. Of great importance in achieving success was military cunning, thorough practical training of all categories of military personnel, as well as a clear organization and maintenance of interaction. At the same time, the combat experience gained shows that in a number of cases the

ambushes did not achieve their goals. This happened when they were often exhibited in the same places or if a pattern was allowed in their organization and conduct. Disruptions occurred even more often when it was not possible to ensure the secrecy and surprise of the actions of the units. In these cases, the forces allocated for setting up an ambush often fell into enemy ambushes themselves and suffered heavy losses.

Accompanying the columns

The highly maneuverable nature of the combat operations of a limited contingent of Soviet troops in the vast expanses of Afghanistan, as well as the constant need for its comprehensive supply of military and national economic property from the USSR, led to the massive movement of convoys, which were convenient targets for enemy attacks. The high vulnerability of convoys was determined by a poorly developed network of roads, a significant part of which was laid through mountain ranges. Narrow mountain roads with a large number of serpentines, with a small turning radius often excluded the possibility of oncoming traffic. Sometimes they did not ensure the passage of motorcades at all without taking special measures.



The main road network was the Kabul-Puli-Khumri-Shibargan-Herat-Kandahar-Kabul ring highway and seven roads branching off from it with narrow passages to high mountain passes and the borders of neighboring states. Most difficult area

The Termez-Kabul road ran through the Hindu Kush mountain range, through its high mountain passes, including the Salang Pass, located at an altitude of about 4 km. This pass is equipped with a system of galleries and the highest tunnel in the world with a length of over 2.5 km, with a total length of a closed gallery of more than 6 km.

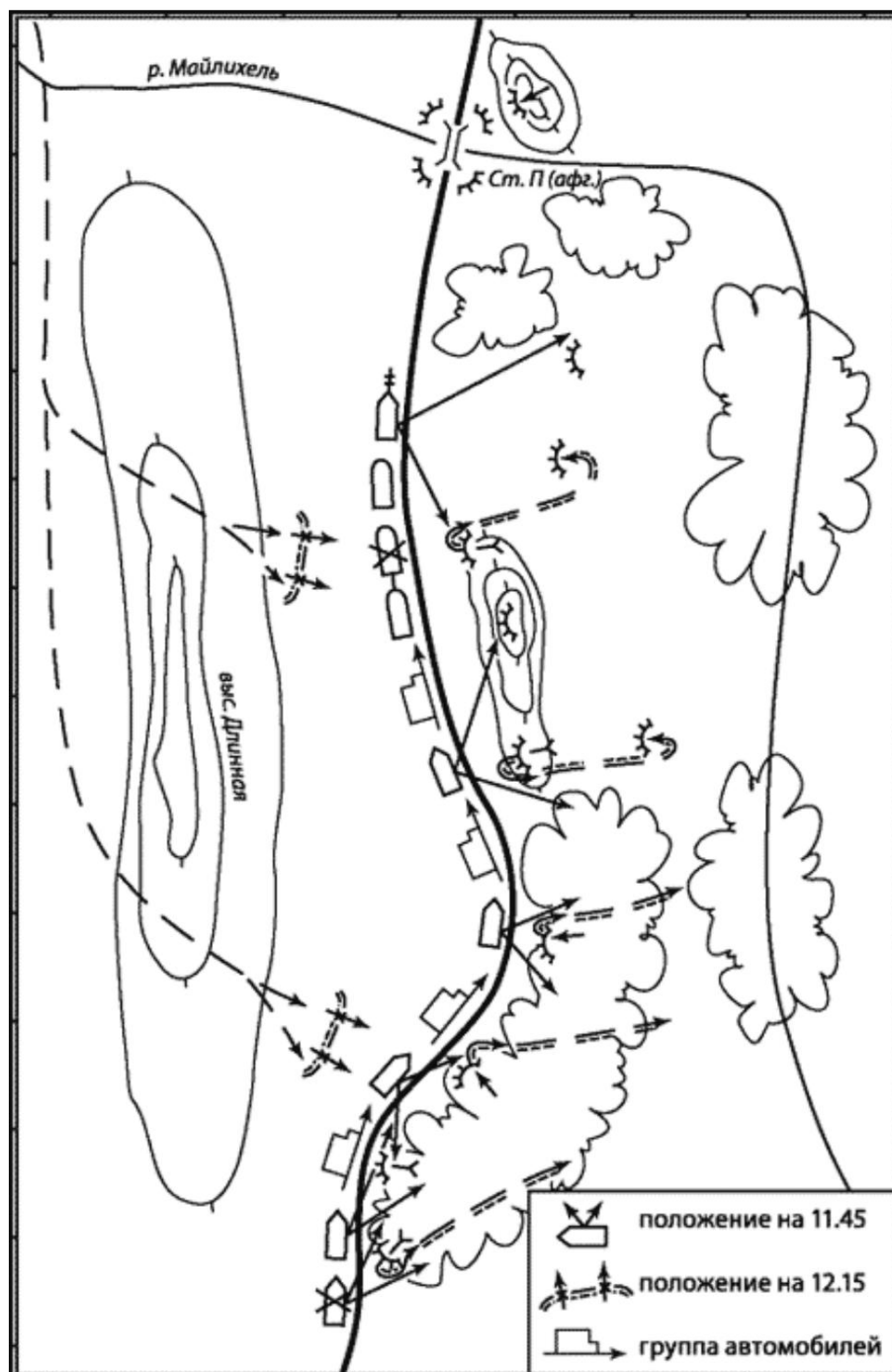
Sharp turns, ascents and descents seriously impeded the movement of car columns on the roads. For example, the length of the ascent and descent to the Salang pass was 80-100 km. Most sections of the road were exposed to collapses, landslides, falling stones, and in winter - snow avalanches and blockages. In winter, most of the transshipment sections of roads were difficult to pass due to steep ascents, descents, and sometimes icing, especially for wheeled vehicles. Mountain rivers were a significant obstacle for cars, which turned out to be practically inaccessible for fording them during a flood. If the majority of highways with a hard surface on the plain had a capacity of 4 to 10 thousand cars per day, then in the highlands it decreased to 500-1000 cars. In

addition, with increasing altitude, personnel and equipment were affected by rarefied air, sudden changes in temperature, icy wind and thick fogs. All this affected the average speed of the movement of automobile columns. Often it was 15–30 km per hour, and sometimes it decreased to 5–10 km per hour.

The tactics of the opposition troops on the roads was based on the actions of small detachments and groups that carried out surprise attacks on columns of cars, most often in the "green zone". On the routes of movement, the rebels laid mines, destroyed certain sections of roads by cutting off transverse ditches, ditches or artificially narrowing the roadway, scattered sharp objects, and sometimes overturned heavy vehicles on the roads.

The enemy paid special attention to the arrangement of mine-explosive barriers on the roads. A wide variety of techniques and methods of mining were used. Most often, sections of roads, road structures, as well as places suitable for accommodation and anti-tank recreation were mined.

(anti-vehicle) mines and land mines were installed in places where the detonation of equipment caused a long stoppage of traffic and created conditions for the defeat of personnel and equipment from ambushes. Ambushes were carried out by groups from 10-15 to 100-150 people. When choosing an ambush site, the terrain was skillfully used (gorges, narrownesses, passes, cornices over the road and galleries). Positions were set up, as a rule, in advance and discreetly on the slopes of mountains or ridges of heights, at the entrance or exit from the gorges, on the pass section of the road, as well as in places where Soviet drivers were likely to rest.



Enemy attack on the column in the "green zone"

The ambush personnel were deployed along the road 150–300 m from it, usually at a distance of 25–40 m from each other. At the same time, the enemy's favorite technique was to deliver a simultaneous blow to the head and tail of the convoy, primarily defeating tankers. At this time, snipers concentrated

aimed fire at older vehicles in order to disorganize the control of the battle. Here is what was said in one of the instructions, abandoned in Afghanistan from abroad: "Question: "When and where is it better to attack the convoy? Answer: "The most convenient places are at the entrance and exit of tunnels, near bridges, at sharp turns, ups and downs, narrowing roads."

Such tactics had to be faced by the troops performing the tasks of escorting and escorting columns. Initially, there was no experience in performing these tasks. It had to be acquired already in combat conditions, sometimes suffering unjustified losses.

For example, at the end of 1881 in the province of Ghazni, the fighting of the rebels intensified. A fierce struggle unfolded on the Massacre-Kabul and Ghazni-Kandahar roads. The enemy began to pay special attention to convoys carrying military and economic goods. In early September, a motorized rifle company, in which Senior

Lieutenant V.I. Rovba, received the task of escorting a convoy of 80 vehicles along the Ghazni-Kabul-Ghazni route with a total length of 160 km. Two motorized rifle platoons were allocated from the company to accompany the column. The general command of these forces was carried out by the company commander. For communication with helicopters there was a radio station from the company

regiment communications.

The preparation of personnel for escorting the convoy consisted in obtaining ammunition, preparing weapons for armored personnel carriers and small arms. Drivers independently checked the technical condition of the cars.

The security of the column was organized as follows. There was one armored personnel carrier in the head of the column, two in the closure. The remaining seven were evenly distributed along the column every 15-16 cars. In the event of an attack by the rebels, the motorized rifle squads following in the convoy were ordered to move off the road towards the enemy and use fire from all types of weapons to ensure the exit of vehicles from under fire. In the future, they had to catch up with the column and take their places. The main condition set by the company commander was to prevent the enemy from

to stop the convoy, the resumption of which was very difficult.



The march to Kabul was completed without incident. However, due to the fact that the refueling of fuel trucks was delayed, the return march began at 10:30 instead of 6:00. For four hours the convoy was at the exit from Kabul, waiting for refueling cars. All this time, single Afghan cars drove past it, the drivers and passengers of which could not help but pay attention to the composition and column size.

Upon the arrival of tankers, the convoy began to move. After 1.5 hours, she, having descended from the small Kabul pass, entered the "green zone". On the route, three kilometers ahead, there was an Afghan army post guarding a bridge across the river. This played a certain psychological role and dulled vigilance. As soon as the convoy entered the "green zone", grenade launchers were fired at the control vehicle and the coupling of vehicles.

The towing tanker was hit. At the same time, the rebels also struck at the tail of the column and disabled the rear armored personnel carrier.

The fire weapons of the escort unit, following the order of the commander, returned fire. The automobile column, using the confusion of the enemy, began to get out of the shelling. After 30 minutes, combat helicopters arrived at the battlefield, called by radio from the company commander. Having struck from the air, they provided active support to motorized rifles. In this battle, one Soviet soldier was killed and eight were wounded.

Even greater losses, Major A.A. Degtev, during the marches were carried by Soviet troops in the "green zone" on the Kabul-Gardez route. In just one flight at the end of 1983, the convoy lost 16 vehicles and about 10 people killed and wounded.

The enemy acted especially insidiously during the passage of convoys with cargo through settlements. They, as a rule, housed small groups of rebels consisting of 25-30 people. Acting covertly, they attacked single vehicles and columns.

Lieutenant Colonel A.A. Agzamov, who served in Afghanistan as a platoon commander of a reconnaissance company, recalls that in early 1981, their unit, stationed in Meymen, was tasked with escorting a convoy of 120 vehicles with cargo for the population along the Andkhoy-Meymene route. The length of the route was 110 km. To accomplish the task, the company was reinforced with an engineering and sapper department, a flamethrower department, a ZSU-2-4 installation and tractors. Two days were given to prepare

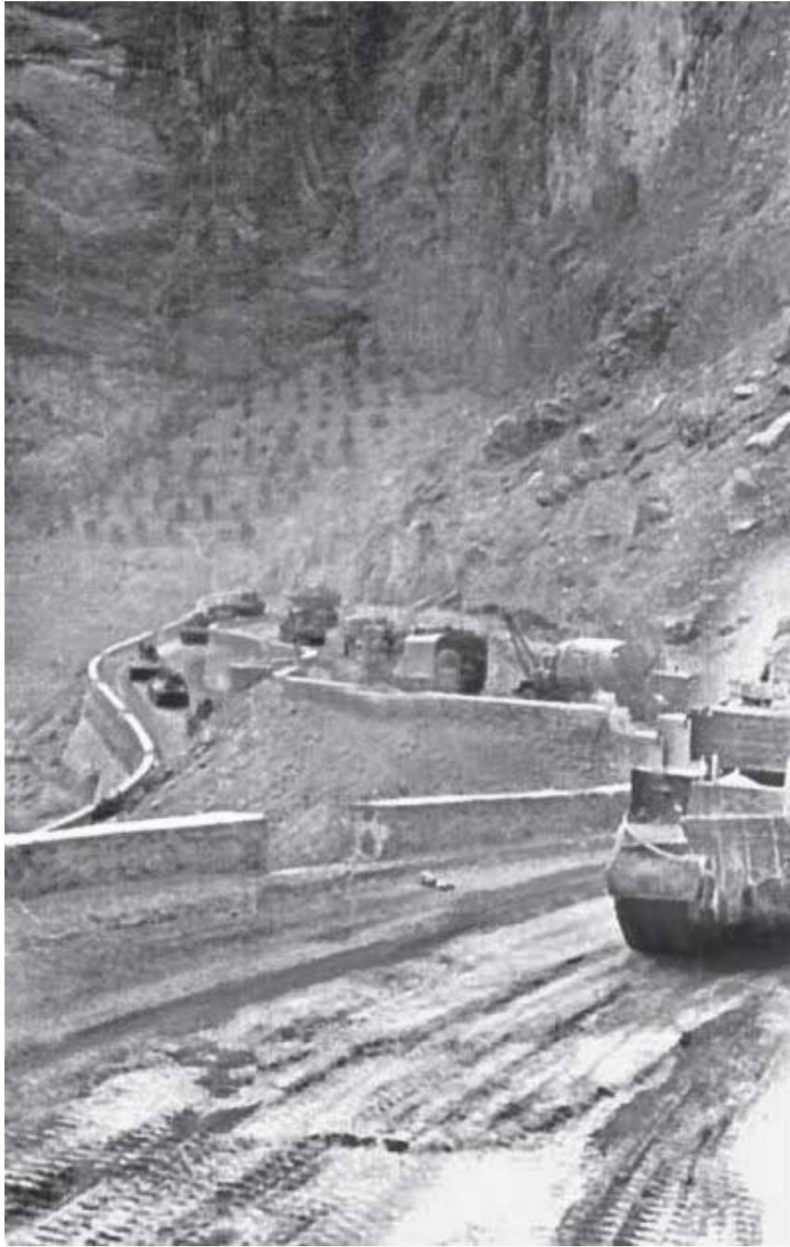
for the march. Particular attention was paid to the preparation of equipment for the march, and weapons - for combat use. N. Beksultanov, deputy commander of the special forces detachment, was appointed senior of the column. After receiving the convoy with the cargo, he clarified the formation of the marching order, distributed the forces and means among the convoy, coordinated the issues of interaction, provided for places for night rest on the route. On the appointed day at five o'clock in the morning, the

column began to move, highlighting forward the head patrol as part of a platoon. By nine o'clock the head patrol went to Daulatabad. He received a message that

the village is deserted. This message alerted the senior column, and he gave the command to strengthen surveillance. When the lead vehicles began to leave the village, an infantry fighting vehicle, in which the head of the column was located, and a tanker with gasoline were hit by grenade launchers. There was a fire, and the cars moving behind stopped in a narrow street. At the same time, the

shelling of the column from small arms began. Two more cars were hit. The column was cut into three parts. Fire escorts returned fire. However, due to the fact that the management of the units was violated, the effectiveness of their actions was low. Under these conditions, combat helicopters provided great assistance

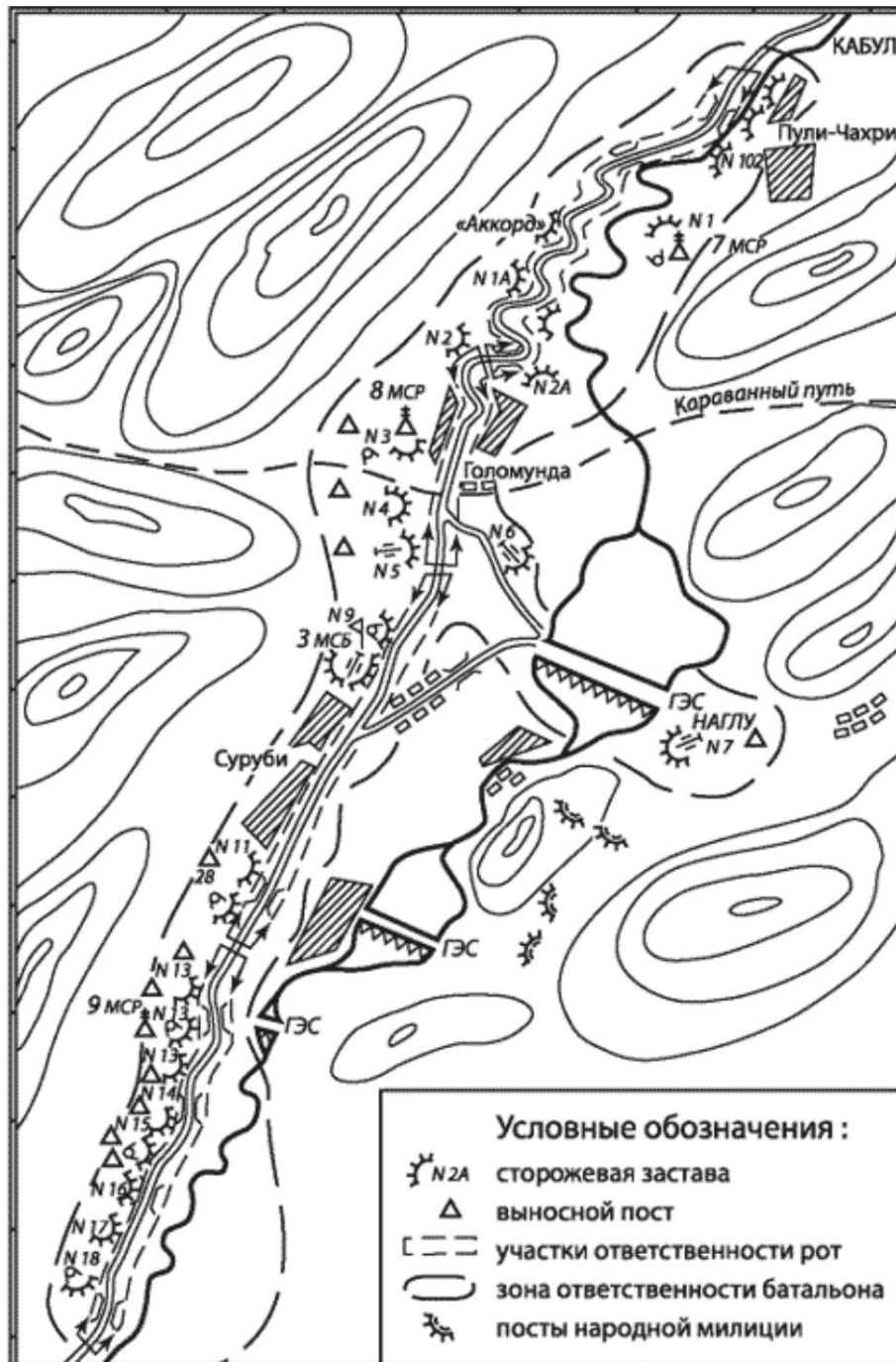
to the convoy, which, having received information from the aircraft controller, began shelling the enemy in the village. The platoon, following in the closure, under the cover of combat helicopters and the fire of infantry fighting vehicles, went to the flank of a group of dushmans and began combing the western part of Daulatabad. As a result of subsequent decisive actions of the paratroopers, the enemy was forced to retreat. However, in the three hours of combat, four drivers were killed, six people were wounded, two infantry fighting vehicles were knocked out, and five vehicles were burned.



The reasons for the first failures should be attributed morally to the psychological unpreparedness of the personnel and the commanders' lack of skills in organizing combat in such difficult conditions. There were cases when young officers got lost in a critical situation, ineptly controlled the fire of cover units, poorly maintained contact with combat helicopters and artillery. The lack of knowledge of the tactics of the enemy's actions also had an effect. All this led to unjustified losses of personnel and equipment, without which not a single march could do.

After the first failures, commanders of all levels began to pay more serious attention to the issues of escorting and escorted columns. Afghanistan is a mountainous country. Here, as Colonel General B.V. Gromov, almost everything necessary for the life support and combat operations of the troops was delivered by road. Therefore, over the nine years during which the columns were being routed, a certain system was developed that made it possible to minimize losses in equipment, people and delivered goods.

Depending on the activity of the enemy's influence on the route of movement and the terrain, the posting of automobile convoys in subsequent years began to be carried out somewhat differently. The routes were guarded by constantly operating outposts. In addition, escort of columns by combat units was still practiced.



Protection of the section of the road Kabul - Jalalabad by the forces of a motorized rifle battalion, by the method of constantly operating outposts

On the main roads, along which permanent outposts were located, the movement of automobile columns was carried out without military cover. Outposts were located in places

the most difficult areas of the terrain, namely, in gorges, on passes, serpentines, in the "green zone", at the entrance and exit of tunnels and other places that created favorable conditions for sabotage and rebel attacks on columns. At each outpost there were on-duty forces and means that were in five minutes' readiness for departure to the place of attack on the convoy, as well as artillery and mortar batteries in readiness to open fire. In addition, taking into account the experience of past years, a road commandant service was organized on critical sections of the route by the forces and means of the road commandant's units and subdivisions. From it, on the routes of movement, mobile patrol-commandant posts on armored vehicles served. The road commandant's service provided regulation and traffic control on highways, dispatch control and safety when passing convoys through tunnels, passes and other dangerous sections of roads, conducting continuous reconnaissance along the road, providing technical assistance and refueling cars, medical care for the personnel of passing convoys and evacuation of the wounded and sick, faulty and damaged equipment, as well as maintaining high military discipline.

To serve on the routes, control centers were created consisting of five to six people (the head, the dispatcher and the gunners of the traffic controllers). They were usually located in the garrisons of troops and areas of outposts. Each control point was assigned a zone of responsibility. In this zone, constant control was exercised over the passage of columns, the safety of their movement, and a clear transfer of columns from one area of responsibility to another was ensured.

To organize control over the movement of columns along the route, a central control room was created. It consisted of officers from the army rear headquarters, the road commandant and automobile service, the operations department and three shifts of dispatchers on duty. The control of the columns was carried out by transmitting signals, commands and orders over the radio network of the dispatch service to neighboring dispatch posts and outposts. The transfer of information was carried out directly by the head of the column. Information about the movement of the column to the control tower, outpost,

the checkpoint of the road commandant battalion, to the center of combat control of the formation and unit was transferred immediately after the exit of the column. Information about incidents and notification of shelling and attacks by the enemy was carried out immediately
all communication channels.

To facilitate the management of the movement of automobile columns, a group of innovators led by Colonel E. Mikhalko developed, designed and implemented a special device, which was an electronic-automatic electrified layout of the terrain. This set of equipment made it possible to receive and analyze information on a selected section of the road around the clock and in a short time, develop the necessary decisions and bring them to the performers. Thanks to this, a real opportunity appeared at any time of the day to control the necessary traffic situation, adjust the traffic order, eliminate congestion and other obstacles, as well as organize maintenance of equipment and rest of personnel in a timely manner.



The columns were formed, as a rule, by vehicles with the same tactical and technical characteristics in terms of speed, maneuverability and carrying capacity. This made it possible to qualitatively and most fully organize the technical

service and facilitate the management of the column on the march. Of no small importance was the preservation of the integrity of the automotive units. The most rational automobile column was a column in the company. It had independence in organizational, material and technical support.

The composition of the automobile column and the order of its construction depended on the situation in which the transportation was carried out, on the degree of enemy influence, the condition of the roads and terrain, as well as on the level of maintenance on the roads and the organization of loading and unloading operations in the areas of loading and unloading. The composition of the convoy usually included from 50 to 80 vehicles. This included control vehicles, vehicles for the transport of goods and closures. To increase the capabilities of automobile columns to repel an enemy attack, they were given armored personnel carriers or infantry fighting vehicles consisting of three to five units or three to five anti-aircraft machine gun installations. They, as a rule, were distributed along the column at the rate of one combat unit for 15–20 vehicles. For the logistic support of the column, the PAK-200, a technical circuit vehicle with spare wheels and spare parts, tools, accessories and lubricants, as well as a wheeled tractor, water and fuel tankers and one or two reserve vehicles were included in the closure. The management of the column and the maintenance of communication with the senior commander and attached funds were ensured by allocating the necessary means of communication. On particularly dangerous routes, combat helicopters were assigned to escort columns. A chief was appointed for each automobile column. In a

column as part of a unit, the head of the unit was the unit commander. The head of the column was entrusted with full responsibility for maintaining order during the march, at loading points, the safety of transported goods and the direct organization of the battle when repelling the attack of the rebels. During the movement, special attention was paid to the organization of alerting personnel about an

enemy attack and actions on a warning signal. In the event of an attack by the rebels on a set signal, the attached fire escort means

entered the battle, and the column at increased speeds and distances, under the cover of their fire, passed through a dangerous area. If it

was impossible to continue the movement, the head of the column, in accordance with the previously made combat crew of the personnel and in close cooperation with the attached firepower, organized the repulse of the enemy attack, gave target designations to the cover units and immediately informed the command and control center of the regiment in whose area of responsibility he was located about the attack on the column and its fire support. The collection of the column after overcoming the dangerous section was carried out in a specially designated area. In a somewhat different way, the convoys were led along those roads where there were no permanent outposts.

In these cases, the escort of the columns was considered to conduct specific military operations. To them in advance and carefully

How

prepared.

Combat units of the Soviet and Afghan troops, artillery and aviation were allocated to protect routes during the passage of transport convoys with materiel through the territory controlled by enemy detachments. Combat units blocked sections of roads and allowed vehicles to pass through them.

Depending on the length of the route, the specific terrain conditions, the situation, the number of detached combat units, a section for one or two daily crossings or the entire route was subjected to blocking. In the first case, the blocking subunits, having missed the transport with materiel, moved to a new sector during the rest of the transport column. So, acting by rifts, they brought the column to the final point. If the length of the route was small, and the allocated forces were sufficient, the blocking and protection of the entire road was carried out immediately until the complete completion of the transport operation.



As a rule, a motorized rifle battalion was allocated to block the route. A specific area of responsibility was determined for him, in which, depending on the nature of the terrain and the tasks to be solved, the necessary number of outposts, posts and ambushes were created, which were a stronghold with a prepared fire system and engineering equipment. A motorized rifle, tank company, as a rule, set up two or three outposts and four or six outposts. The locations of the guard posts were determined by order so that the posts had a visual connection with each other and invisible zones of the route were excluded. These zones of invisibility were guarded by armored blocks consisting of two or three armored vehicles (tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, armored personnel carriers). The time for setting up and removing armored blocks was determined daily by order of the head of military operations.

In order to quickly build up efforts to repel the attack of the rebels in any part of the zone of responsibility, a group of highly maneuverable armored units consisting of 3-4 objects, usually reinforced by mortar crews, was created at the battalion command and observation post.

For each posting of columns with cargo in the evening, the commander of the combat unit received information from the combat control center from the senior commander. It contained information about the number of columns, vehicles in the column and escort vehicles, as well as the time of movement of the columns. The order to escort the columns was given by the regiment commander. The personnel allocated for blocking were daily provided with all the information regarding each category.

When placing armored blocks on the route, a movement support detachment was sent forward. The locations of each armored block were checked, as a rule, by a pair of sappers. After setting up all the security elements, a convoy with supplies of materiel left on the route. Usually she was accompanied by combat units. The preparation of combat units for escort

began, as a rule, two or three days in advance, immediately after receiving a combat mission. It included the preparation of equipment, the creation of the necessary stock of ammunition, fuel and lubricants, food and medical equipment in the companies; distribution of personnel by vehicles; company and platoon commanders conducting exercises with personnel, as well as distributing it for observation, evacuation of faulty and damaged equipment, equipping machine gun belts when ammunition is spent, first aid and evacuation of the wounded. The commanders paid special attention to the training of snipers, gunners-operators of combat vehicles, machine gunners, ATGM crews, flamethrowers, signalmen, gunners-spotters, non-standard aircraft controllers, orderlies and sappers.



The march usually began early in the morning and ended late in the evening. During the advance, a gap between the vehicles was not allowed, since this, as a rule, was immediately used by the enemy to mine the road and attack the lagging vehicles. The cunning of the enemy had no limits. In recent years, in order to inflict more significant losses on the columns of Soviet troops on the roads and especially on the streets of settlements, the rebels began to set up distracting groups in front of their ambushes. By their actions they fettered the reconnaissance and security of the column, and in the meantime the main ambush forces attacked its main part, hitting people and equipment. Such tactics,

according to Lieutenant Colonel D.F. Savchin, who served in Afghanistan as the chief of staff of the battalion, was used by the rebels in October 1988 during an attack on an Afghan food convoy accompanied by his unit, consisting of up to 800 vehicles, following the Puli-Khumri-Kabul route. On the way, the column stretched for more than 50 km. When approaching the Salang tunnel, the rebels fired on two armored personnel carriers in the middle of the column and started a fight. At the same time, out of sight from the route was committed

attack on eight food trucks. As a result of such actions, the column lost 22 vehicles by the end of the march. In order to exclude

such cases, the commanders of combat units began to create two compositions of reconnaissance and security agencies. The first squad could fight with distracting enemy groups, carry out reconnaissance and organize defense inside the settlements and villages. The second was used for further escorting of the column along the route, including for its rapid passage through settlements. The success was also facilitated by the initiative and foresight of the commanders, aimed

at working out with the unit the multivariate actions in the event of an enemy attack. One such example was given by Major A.M. Portnov, who became a direct participant in the events. The escort of the convoy with the cargo along the Shekhravan-Perhai route, 114 km long, was carried out under the command of the

company commander by two air assault platoons, reinforced by a mortar platoon, a machine-gun compartment, and two crews of automatic grenade launchers mounted on an armored personnel carrier. To strengthen the protection of the Soviet units, the Afghan company "Tsarandoya" was attached, the personnel of which was evenly distributed over each vehicle with a load. Two airborne combat vehicles and one armored personnel carrier operated at a distance of up to 1 km from each other in the field guard.

Near the village of Basiz, the enemy, having missed the first group of marching guards, tried to destroy the armored personnel carrier and stop the convoy by firing from a grenade launcher and detonating a guided land mine near the bridge across the canal. At the same time, four trucks were set on fire in the convoy. However, the first success did not

bring the Dushmans a big victory. In accordance with an earlier decision, the marching guards and the air assault platoon made a maneuver and went to the rear of the enemy. The fire of the combat vehicle, the crew of automatic grenade launchers and the mortar platoon, the enemy was pinned

down, and then surrounded and destroyed. Another example confirming the truth that the high level of combat training of personnel ensured the ac

brought Major A.I. Guboglo, who served in Afghanistan as a platoon commander. In the winter of

1982, the 7th motorized rifle company accompanied the convoy with cargo along the Kabul-Ghazni route. Her armored personnel carriers were placed two at the head and tail of the column, and the rest, one every eight wheeled vehicles. The reconnaissance patrol as part of a platoon operated at a distance of up to 10 km.



When approaching the "green zone" in the Madihegy area on the bridge over the river, a towed vehicle was blown up by a radio-controlled mine, and the column was fired from the commanding heights. Attempts to clear the road and lead to a safe place were unsuccessful. Despite dense fire from small arms, armored personnel carriers and helicopter strikes, the enemy continued to intensively fire at the convoy. Under these conditions, the company commander called for an additional flight of helicopters on the radio. Then, on his orders, the first platoon operating in the reconnaissance patrol, with the support of a machine-gun grenade launcher platoon and helicopter strikes, attacked the enemy and captured the height. After that, the column was able to continue moving.

The combat experience gained in escorting columns in Afghanistan found wide application at the final stage of the war, especially during the withdrawal of Soviet troops, which began on May 15, 1988 and ended on February 15, 1989. As part of this operation, more than 100 thousand people were to be withdrawn, a huge amount of equipment and stocks of materiel from 25 garrisons and 179 military camps. The opposition leaders were well aware that they failed to disrupt the

withdrawal of Soviet troops, the more they were warned and remembered the hard lesson they had learned during the withdrawal of six regiments in 1986 - However, a number of Alliance-7 leaders insisted on organizing a "bloodbath" . Therefore, the Soviet command paid serious attention to the wiring and escort of columns during the withdrawal of troops. Along with other units, the task of ensuring the withdrawal of columns was also solved by the battalion of the Hero of the Soviet Union, Major S.N. Gushchin. As a rule, the battalion received the combat mission of escorting columns during the withdrawal of troops and the export of

national economic goods 2–3 days before the start of hostilities. During this time, all organizational issues were coordinated. A day before the start of the operation, the officers of the battalion management conducted a drawing of the upcoming hostilities with all categories of servicemen. Conducting training sessions with personnel on the types of combat, technical and logistic support made it possible to prepare them morally, psychologically and physically for the performance of a combat mission. Depending on the length of the march, the battalion deployed one or two blocks in its area of responsibility with the obligatory blocking of the final area. The battalion's exit

to the block was usually carried out early in the morning. The time of passage of the starting line was planned for 5-6 hours. The march order included a movement support detachment (up to a reinforced motorized rifle company), from which a head marching outpost stood out at a distance of visual communication and fire support. It was followed by a column of the main forces of the battalion, rear columns and an escorted column. At the end it went

technical short circuit and rear marching outpost.

The battalion commander was at the head or in the center of the battalion column. Along the way, he clarified the decision to block

route, personally indicated for each object the route of advance and the place of the firing position. Sometimes this task was assigned to the company commander. The deployment of the block began with the release of the battalion to the border of its zone. To place combat vehicles in position, a tank with a trawl or other engineering equipment capable of neutralizing enemy mines was necessarily used. The object moved strictly along the cleared track. With access to the area of firing positions, trawling of a section of the terrain was carried out along the length and width, 1.5–2 times the size of the object.

When choosing a firing position in the area of a possible ambush of the rebels, this area was processed by the fire of tanks and combat vehicles on the move. The exhibiting of objects was carried out without stopping the movement, at a speed of about 10 km per hour.

The main requirements observed when placing objects were visual communication with neighbors and the possibility of maintaining fire. In areas of possible enemy action, it was practiced to deploy paired objects. The command and observation post of the battalion was usually located in the places of the most probable actions of dushmans. In the same place, as a rule, firing positions for a mortar battery were chosen. A mobile group was created to solve problems that suddenly arose. It usually consisted

of a tank, a grenade launcher platoon and one or three mortars. The group commander was appointed deputy company commander or an experienced platoon commander. The mortar battery was located in such a way as to support the battle with fire in cooperation with the artillery battery. The exit of the column to the designated area, depending on the prevailing situation, was carried out, as a rule, 1–2 hours after the block was set up or on the next day. Such support during the escort of columns allowed the battalion to successfully solve problems in the areas of Kandahar, Chaghcharan, Mussakala, Farah, Herat and others.

Thus, over the nine years of the war, rich combat experience was gained in escorting and escorting columns in the difficult mountainous desert terrain of Afghanistan in conditions of guerrilla warfare by the enemy. It consisted in a correct understanding of the role of guards on the march and the order of action of forces and means in the event of a surprise attack by the enemy. In addition, wiring and

escorting columns in Afghanistan required a number of serious tactical changes to military equipment and to improve the quality of training of commanders, headquarters and troops.

Pray to the gods of war - gunners

The war in Afghanistan once again showed that the most important condition for achieving victory in battle was and remains the effective fire defeat of the enemy, the main means of achieving which was artillery. As part of a limited contingent of Soviet troops, it was represented by regular artillery systems that are part of motorized rifle divisions (brigades), as well as a number of artillery systems of an army set.

The most numerous and, perhaps, the most effective artillery weapon systems in Afghanistan were mortars. They turned out to be indispensable in the conduct of combat in the mountains, in repelling attacks by rebels on outposts and posts, in the conduct of hostilities in settlements and in the "green zone".

In combat operations, 82-mm mortars were widely used. They were light, active and mobile artillery systems and could be effectively used by units of various branches of the armed forces not only on flat terrain, but also, most importantly, in the mountains. At the same time, mortars were carried by personnel in disassembled form, and in some cases they were installed on an armored base, which several times increased its maneuverability and protection from enemy fire. To solve more voluminous fire missions, towed mortars of 120 and

240 mm caliber were also quite effectively used. With the help of a car, an armored personnel carrier, an infantry fighting vehicle or a tank, they were transported to the battlefield, where, due to their relatively low weight, if necessary, they could be moved by calculation forces. Their ammunition had significant destructive power and had a large radius of lethal fragmentation. At the same time, the relatively low maneuverability of towed mortars on the battlefield made their crews vulnerable to enemy fire.

In Afghanistan, for the first time in the fighting of the Soviet troops, 240-mm self-propelled mortars were used. These systems, mounted on a tracked armored base, could move quickly on the battlefield, hitting the most important enemy targets.

The effectiveness of their fire was especially high due to the use of a mine corrected in flight.



In addition to mortars, various howitzers participated in the hostilities. The towed 122-mm howitzer was widely used at outposts and outposts. Possessing the ability for circular fire, a firing range of over 15 km and a large variety of artillery ammunition, it was an effective fire weapon, mainly in stationary conditions. Self-propelled howitzers of 122 and 152 mm caliber were widely used for fire destruction of the enemy in

maneuverable types of combat. These systems had great firepower, maneuverability and bulletproofness and were indispensable on the battlefield. Self-propelled 152-mm howitzers were widely used not only for firing from closed firing positions, but also for direct and

semi-direct fire, and with direct escort of motorized rifle units during the capture of base areas, they acted as assault guns. In a number of cases, 152-mm self-propelled guns were also used

to solve particularly difficult fire missions, which made it possible to fire at enemy targets at a distance of up to 30 km. At the same time, the small sector of fire of this system significantly reduced the effectiveness of its use in the mountains against small, highly maneuverable enemy groups.

Despite the fact that the armed formations of the opposition did not have armored vehicles in their arsenal, the Soviet troops in Afghanistan also used various anti-tank weapons to solve fire missions. Anti-tank guided systems, which had a high probability of hitting the target from the first shot, were effectively used to combat enemy firing points located in caves, among stone rubble and in other shelters where it was difficult, and sometimes impossible, to use artillery.

100-mm anti-tank guns, as a rule, did not participate in maneuvering actions. They were intended to protect communications and facilities of great importance. For example, approaches from the "green zone" to the Kunduz airfield were fired upon by 100-mm artillery guns from the regular anti-tank battalion of the motorized rifle division assigned to guard this object. The high rate of fire and accuracy of fire of these artillery systems made it possible to carry out fire missions against the observed enemy in a short time with fragmentation ammunition. In addition, multiple launch rocket systems of the Grad and Uragan types were also used to engage

the enemy in fire during the fighting in Afghanistan. Possessing significant destructive power and a large area of destruction, these systems were used to destroy an openly located enemy on ridges of heights, mountain plateaus and in valleys. In some cases, the MLRS was used for remote mining of the area, which made it difficult, and in some cases excluded the enemy from leaving the "blocks". A wide range of ammunition of various directions made it possible

use the MLRS at ranges of 20-30 km for avalanches, the formation of fires and stone blockages on enemy territory.

Mobile reconnaissance points in the mountains have shown the ability to perform a wide range of tasks. They not only "spotted" the enemy, but also made it possible to serve the firing of our artillery, as well as to illuminate the KNP area for self-defense at night.

In Afghanistan, difficulties arose with the use of sound-measuring systems. This was due to the small caliber of enemy artillery (50-107 mm), the predominant choice of its firing positions in the folds of the terrain (kyariz, crevices, reverse slopes of heights), which muffled the sounds of shots, as well as its high mobility, which did not allow orienting the efforts of sound reconnaissance to a certain area. In this regard, sound-measuring complexes showed low efficiency in reconnaissance in the mountains of firing mortars and rocket launchers of dushmans. The same reasons led to the limited use of radar stations for reconnaissance of the

enemy. At the same time, they were effectively used to correct the fire of their artillery, especially at night. Portable ground reconnaissance stations made it possible to detect moving objects at short ranges. However, they could not be used to correct fire due to the impossibility of determining the deviations of gaps from the target.